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Predestined For Adoption

Ephesians 1:4-5 (NASB), ***“In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will...”***

One of the more controversial subjects within the Southern Baptist Convention today surrounds Reformed Theology. Within the Convention there is an increasing movement fueled most especially by the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and Dr. Al Mohler and others to return to the theology of the reformers. What this means is a return to one of the central understandings of Scripture which is that salvation is from start to finish a complete work of God through His Son Jesus Christ. Salvation in no part is dependent upon the actions, the inclinations, or the manipulations of sinful man.

I believe with all my heart that Calvinism or Reformed Theology gets a bad rap if you will and is severely misunderstood, but I also understand that some just will not endure sound doctrine. The end of Ephesians 1:4 and the entirety of verse 5 does an excellent job of explaining one of the central tenets of Reformed Theology.

Within these words are two very important points about God’s foreknowledge and yes His predestination. The first point is that God loves us. At the very end of verse 4 it says ***“In love.” “In love”*** God has predestined us for salvation from our sins and an eternity separated from Him in hell.

God’s love is in the words of John MacArthur His “divine motive” for saving us. In Ephesians 2:4 it says, ***“But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us.”*** In the Old Testament in Deuteronomy 7:8 it says ***“but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”***

God does predestine but He does not do this to be capricious and cruel as some would suggest. It says here in verse 5 that He has ***“predestined us to adoption as sons...”*** God adopts us as His children out of love for us. Human parents who adopt can and do bestow upon their adopted sons and daughters their love, resources and an inheritance. What they cannot give them however are their own distinct characteristics. God however miraculously gives His own nature to those whom He has adopted as His children, whom He has elected and who have placed their trust in His Son Jesus. God makes us His children and in the divine image of His divine Son, giving us not just the riches of Christ but also the blessing of His very nature. Romans 8:15 reminds us, ***“For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of adoption as sons by which we cry out, ‘Abba! Father!’”***

The second point then is that all of this; His love, His predestination, His adoption of us as His elect and His children is all done ***“according to the kind intention of His will.”*** The phrase ***“kind intention”*** is translated to mean “good pleasure.” God elects us for salvation because of His intrinsic kindness and His desire to be in full and complete fellowship with Him. In Philippians 2:13 it says, ***“For it is God who is at work in you,***

both to will and to work for His good pleasure.” This could only happen “through Jesus Christ.”

We cannot believe that God is all-powerful and all knowing and then ascribe some of the responsibility for salvation to ourselves. God cannot be the Almighty Sovereign God and then somehow leave His most vital work up to us. The misconception that often comes with the concept of predestination is the thought that since God has elected then we no longer have any responsibility to evangelize. This is a severe misunderstanding of His Word at best and false teaching at worst.

As a Christ-follower I cannot ignore the Great Commission which calls on me to ***“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.”*** I believe that when we accept that God is sovereign over salvation that this then frees us and motivates us to share the Gospel to whomever we come in contact with. Once we understand that salvation is not about what we do or how “relevant” we make the message then we are truly surrendered to Him in the ultimate act of love... sharing the saving message of Jesus Christ. This is then when God is truly glorified.

If you have any questions about what you have read today please feel free to contact me at pastotra@centurylink.net. You also may contact me on Twitter at @Adamspastor or on Facebook as well. Or you can just simply call me here at Calvary Baptist Church 970-824-5222.