

<b>Book</b>	Ephesian
<b>Topic</b>	The Grace of God in Election and Predestination
<b>Reference</b>	Ephesians 1:1-4
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<b>Speaker</b>	Dr Peter Ng

## **1. INTRODUCTION TO STRUCTURE:**

We have Ephesus which is in Asia Minor. Ephesus is important in the time of Paul because it was the second largest city in the known world at that time. Athens was the largest city in Greece at that time. It is located where the river comes down and it was a very important port at that time. Ephesus was one of the rarest cities where they have got huge library, which was a luxury in those days, which means they were very-very learned and they have got an amphitheater with a capacity of 25,000 people. It is the center of commerce. They have Agora which is a Greek marketplace. Agora is a place where you have got news, everybody talks about each other, the news is disseminated through the Agora.

### **History of the Ephesian Church:**

This is the second visit of Paul which is in Acts 19 where he stayed for about three to three and half years and it was ended by a riot. The reason why there was a riot was because of this temple of Artemis. Artemis is a Greek goddess of the hunt. In Roman language it is called Diana. So Artemis and Diana are the same and there is a lot of money to be made, because you sell little Artemis icons, you offer sacrifices, you buy all those things, huge-huge commerce, because everybody goes there to worship. In fact, you may not appreciate it for how beautiful the temple of Artemis was, it was one of the seven ancient wonders. People would come from far away to worship at the temple of Artemis and at that particular time Paul was starting to share the gospel.

Gospel was a huge threat to the people at that time. You either got Jews who worship Yahweh in a synagogue or you got people who are gentiles, who are Greeks, who worship Artemis and if you do not worship Artemis anymore you lose business. So there was a huge riot because people were starting to lose business. The people who were worshipping Artemis were very upset, especially the traders and Paul had to quickly leave to go to Macedonia.

Now Paul writes to this church whom he had spent three and a half years with for the last time and he writes from Rome. It is like one of the prison epistles; Philippians, Colossians and Ephesians. They were written at a time where he is in some danger and the danger is being executed. These are some of the last words that he would pen from a very difficult situation in prison.

### **What the Book of Ephesians is about?**

If you look at what we have studied before; Corinthians is written to people who has got wrong ideas about spiritual gifts. They have got wrong ideas about sexuality. The book of Ephesians does not address any particular problem; it is a general letter. In fact, if you look at the verse there, the epistle of Paul to the Ephesians, some manuscripts don't have Ephesians, it is just blank. So we feel that, it is probably because it is a round letter but to send to all the seven churches in Asia Minor. So it applies to everybody and important thing about Ephesians, why it is very-very important, it is

called the Queen of the Epistles, it is because it's primary focus is looking at the world from God's perspective; his choice, his holiness, his godliness, his grace and then our sin.

We are going to look at the world from God's point of view. All too often we see the world from our point of view. When we first became Christians, we want our joy, we want our happiness, we want our health, we want our jobs, we want our blessings, but the problem is that it is the wrong way around. The most important person in the world isn't you, it is actually God. Now if you change your perspective in life and look at things from God's point of view, your whole perspective in life changes. I mean, the more you think about it from man's point of view, it is very depressing and that's the situation with Paul. You can't be more depressed than Paul sitting in the middle of prison with all armguards and thinking your life will be taken away anytime and yet the words that come up from Paul are astounding. You would've thought, he is sitting in a palace. He writes things from God's perspective, that's the difference you are going to learn in this particular epistle.

### **The Structure of Ephesians:**

The first half will deal with the glory and grace of God and the second half will deal with the peace of God in the church. So we are looking at chapter 1, 2 and 3 and then 4, 5 and 6. It divides neatly into two. Glory and grace of God section is theological or doctrinal and the other section is practical. The first section will tell us, who God is and what he has done for us and you can't go approach life like who God is and what he has done for us and you sit down and do nothing. That must prompt you to do something and this part is how we should live because of what he has done for us.

In first half of chapter 1 we will deal with

- Every spiritual blessing under heaven in Christ
- Election
- Predestination
- Adoption
- Knowledge of His will
- Holy Spirit as a guarantee
- Christ headship
- His power in us
- Sin and Spiritual death
- Made spiritually alive
- Made in to one man
- Suffering for Him
- Praying to experience His love

Then the practical session:

- Maintaining unity
- Proper use of spiritual gifts
- Truth and love
- How the body matures

- Putting on new self
- Renewal of mind
- Dealing with anger
- Living with integrity
- Forgiving
- Dealing with bitterness

## **2. WHY DOCTRINE IS IMPORTANT?**

Doctrine is basically drawing together all the information strands from a lot of books and forming an understanding which is doctrine. Doctrine is extremely important, Thomas Jefferson wrote the American Constitution and he actually said, ***“It’s not your creed but your deed”***.

So what he is saying is that, it doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you are good and do good thing, but that’s not necessarily true. Some of you just want to be practical, you don’t want to be very theoretical but that’s not true. Look at how people live,

*1 Corinthians 15:32 (ESV) What do I gain if, humanly speaking, I fought with beasts at Ephesus? If the dead are not raised, “Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.*

If there is no resurrection, then we better eat and drink for tomorrow you die. So resurrection is a doctrine, it is a belief, it is a creed. Action is tomorrow, we die, better eat and drink. So your action follows your belief that’s very-very important. Dean and Marianne Metropoulos are a couple from USA, they are very rich people, giving a pledge of money to the poor. Why did they give money to the poor?

*“The true measure of who we are and the ultimate fulfilment we can enjoy is based on how we share our gifts with the multitudes of our fellow human beings who live their lives without hope. Sharing our good fortune with others allows our legacy and purpose to become lasting and meaningful. Unconditional giving of ourselves, and what we have, reflects a nobility of spirit which reaches out and binds all of us.”*

So you see, what is their doctrinal belief, nobility of spirit which reaches out and binds all of us. So if you have got noble spirit, it will reach out and bind us. By giving means we are very good. So giving money is a measure of who we are and this is a purpose which is lasting and meaning that money can do something. So they don’t give money out of the blue, they give money because they have a doctrinal belief. It may not be in Jesus Christ but you have to have a belief for any action at all.

Then you have got Bill Gates, he sat aside 50 billion dollars of his wealth to really help the poor and he actually influenced many billionaires all over the world to give their money. You Zhonghui is the first Chinese woman to sign the “Giving Pledge” and this is why she gives,

*“Acting positive makes people gain wisdom and wealth. In their pursuit of career development, the entrepreneur becomes bigger and stronger. Staying kind, means to treasure life, respect nature,*

*always have goodwill and be ready to help others in need. This makes people mentally healthy and blessed."*

That's her reason. So it means she gives because good will and be ready to help others, giving is a manner of treasuring life, giving is staying kind and respecting nature. These are all her reasons for giving. So people always have a reason for their actions. It never is alone. This makes people mentally healthy and blessed. So if you give you become mentally healthy and blessed.

### **3. GOD'S GRACE AND PEACE**

*Ephesians 1:1-2 (ESV) Paul, an **apostle** of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the **saints** who are in **Ephesus**, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

The word 'saints' are basically people set aside. Saints are not special people like Mother Teresa or the Pope. Saints are basically normal Christians who are basically set apart for God's purposes, and the first thing he writes them is grace to you and peace from God our father and our Lord Jesus Christ. So he wishes grace.

#### **What is grace?**

It is receiving something which you don't deserve at all. The most powerful word in Christianity is actually grace. It is the only religion of faith in the world that has the word grace that sets us apart from everybody else. If you look at the first three chapters of Ephesians, it is all about grace. How he has blessed us without any reason in terms of our merit and when you actually experience his grace, this grace then transforms our life.

If you look at Paul writing to the people of Ephesus. The people of Ephesus were immoral but grace has touched their lives. They are saved by grace. If we look at Paul, he was a murderer, he persecuted Christians, he hunted them down, separated children from the fathers and mothers and had them killed. Paul is a picture of grace. The Ephesian church is a picture of grace. You and me, we are a picture of grace. So grace has created the church and today we are going to learn about that grace.

#### **Peace:**

The English meaning of word 'peace' is 'no fighting', which is a terrible meaning. The word 'peace' actually comes from a Jewish concept, which is 'Shalom'. Shalom is not just peace. So Paul says, grace to you and Shalom from God our father. We translate Shalom as wholeness. That means reaching perfection, prosperity, total satisfaction in life, all your natural gifts fully employed, being maximum of what you are. Shalom is your optimal self as it were.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi is an American author and psychology professor, he actually describes an aspect of shalom. A music composer writes, "*You are in such an ecstatic state as though you almost don't exist. I have experienced this time and again. My hand seems devoid of myself and I have nothing to do with what is happening. I just sit there watching it in a state of awe and wonderment as the music just flows out of itself.*"

This is someone who is writing song. An Olympic figure skater writes, “It was just one of those programs that clicked. I mean everything went right everything felt good ...it’s just such a rush, like you feel it could go on and on and on, like you don’t want it to stop because it was going so well . It’s almost as though you don’t have to think.”

She glides effortlessly across the ice skating ring, that is shalom. Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi actually derives a graph. This is what happens in life: if you are very skilled person and you do a job with very low profile. If you have high skill and you don’t have much difficulty, you get bored or apathetic, if you have a job which has got very-very difficult job for example and your skills are very-very low you will get very anxious. So the theory is that, there is a place in life where your skills are high and your difficulty is high, it is called flow and the job that you do is very taxing and you’re so damn good and you do it, that’s called flow. That’s called shalom. The perfect place where God wants you to be. Shalom is like a symphony of life, made meaningful with rightful relationship with God. When you wish someone shalom that is what it is.

When you got shalom and you got shalom with God, when you are your optimal self at peace with God and every one of your dreams fulfilled, it will affect how you interact with people. So the second half of Ephesians will tell you how to interact with people because you got this peace from God by His grace. That’s how it all ties in.

#### **4. EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING**

*Ephesians 1:3-4 (ESV) 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, 4 even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

So we need to change our perspective. Verses 3 to 4 theme is one long sentence. The long sentence is a prayer; it is a worship. So if you were going to pray in a prayer meeting, you often don’t have the words to pray, so Paul gives you the language. So if you take these verses 3 down to 14 and you take it and then you learn to pray it and this praying it is very powerful because you are actually worshipping God for all the things, otherwise you will sit here and you are going to worship, thank you God for my wife, thank you God for my children, thank you God I have a good life. After that you will see that what kind of prayer is that, there is not much in it, because your world is **you**. You want to use your mouth and offer God something big and huge and that’s when you use this language and you interact with God and you go to God’s heart when you worship him. So you use this. So there are a lot of parts of Ephesians which you can use for your prayer. There are two particular sections that teaches you to pray for power and experience of his love and when we use this we can actually enrich our prayer life practically.

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places, every single one, that means there is nothing left. The most commonly repeated phrase in the first 14 verses here is  **blessings**. The whole passage is about blessing, overflowing with blessing. With all these blessings you have got one phrase in common and it is “**in Christ, in Him, in the Beloved**”. So you actually have all these spiritual blessings because we are in Christ. In Christ means that we are united with Christ. So the first thing that we need to know that because we are Christians, because we have hitched our wagon to Jesus, because Jesus lives in us we have every spiritual blessing such as:

- He choose us
- predestined us,
- adopted us,
- saved us,
- forgave us,
- gave us ministry of His will,
- inheritance,
- the gospel,
- filled with Holy Spirit

It is like a child, you know, when you are born like this you actually have every single thing that you need for life. You have got eyes to see, a brain to think, hands to move, legs to walk, stomach to eat. Every spiritual blessing has been given but the difference is whether you grow up to appropriate those. A child can go on to become an Olympic swimmer because she has got the lungs, she has got the hands, she has got the legs, but she has got to learn to exercise that and believe that and to claim that and to move in that and the same applies to every single one of us. We all have every spiritual blessing like that under heaven. We just need to know it, we just need to appropriate it and exercise it.

So therefore, there isn't anybody in this church who has got less than other people. If you have a gift it will be different from other people but you are no less than other people and that's a beautiful thing. When you start to pray, you sit down there and say, "Oh God you have given me everything." Paul writes that you may have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places even when he was sitting inside a prison. It is a bit ironic. If you are sitting in a café in Paris, enjoying your retirement, I would've said every spiritual blessing, but Paul was sitting in prison and then telling people you have got every spiritual blessing in heaven. This epistle is amazing. Prison is always depressing, but Paul sits in prison and he has every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Paul was sitting in the dungeon or the bottom of the ground where there is no light but for him because of his faith, he is in heaven as it were.

Now the first two blessings are election:

*He has chosen us before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

This is a very powerful verse; he has chosen us; he has elected us. This is the order of salvation; we are elected that means God has selected you long-long-long time ago God chose you, when someone brought the gospel to call you, you probably went to Alpha then you are born again, which means your spirit rejuvenates. Only if you are born again then you can be converted and make a decision to accept Jesus as your Lord and Saviour. Once you do that, you have God's righteousness given to you through Christ, adopted as a son /daughter, you are made holy and God make sure you make it to the end. Perseverance and then death and after death basically there is glorification. All of this is done by God. So this is salvation, the whole thing.

#### **Order of Salvation:**

- Election

- Gospel call
- Born again
- Conversion
- Justification
- Adoption
- Sanctification
- Perseverance
- Death

Today we are talking about, it all begins millions of years ago. That means your story didn't begin three years ago in Alpha, it began millions of years ago when you were a twinkle in your father's eye, when God knew you and God choose you.

### **Why are you a Christian with all these blessings?**

It is not like that you are the best, humbler, more willing or you made the thing, but basically he chose **us**. Some people will try to interpret this us as saying that, this means God choose you as a group that means he chose a church, but a group is made of individuals. So when he says he chose us, therefore the 'us' is made of individuals. This is a very important doctrine to understand. If God million years ago already planned to choose you, do you think you will make it till the end? We plan so many things in life and with your power you still get it to the end. It is God, if God has so planned that you will come to know him and you will be given every spiritual blessing in heaven, it will happen, it will absolutely happen. It is election. God sees everything at one time, the beginning and the end. He chose you before the foundation of the world.

### **Is there free will in this idea of "I choose you, you choose me"?**

Imagine there is a very beautiful young lady there and a boy likes her. So every day he puts himself in front of her, don't know what accidentally bumped into her. She goes to sowing class, he is there sweeping the floor. She comes to church, he happens to line up in front of her and then she says, actually the fellow is not bad, handsome and looks like Brad Pitt and suddenly she says, "I think I like this boy". Then being modern age, she asked that boy out for a dinner. In the end, they fall in love.

### **Who chose who in this story? Did the boy choose girl or the girl chose the boy?**

It is the boy who chose the girl, because he put himself in front of the girl. Every time there he put himself in front of the girl. He keeps on coming and at last the girl chose him. The girl thought that she chose the boy, but actually it is the boy who chose her. Predestination, election is like that. The boy doesn't go to the girl and say, "you must love me." There is free will there. As far as the girl is concerned she will think that she chose the boy. But at the back of the mind the boy already engineered everything. The boy made himself the only choice.

That's exactly how predestination works. God doesn't force you. God lets you make up your mind but he arranges situation. So his choice is ultimate, yours is penultimate.

*John 6:63-65 (ESV) It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But there are some of you who do not believe.” (For Jesus knew from the beginning who those were who did not believe, and who it was who would betray him.) 65 And he said, “This is why I told you that no one can come to me unless it is granted him by the Father.”*

So even you don't believe, it is because God didn't called you, God didn't elect you. Jesus is very clear about that.

*Acts 13:48 And when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord, and as **many as were appointed to eternal life believed***

So before you actually say, I believe in Jesus but actually it is the opposite Jesus chose you. So you got to be appointed in order to believe.

*1 Thessalonians 1:4-5 (ESV) For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has **chosen** you, 5 because our gospel came to you not only in word, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction.*

So God chooses, you cannot believe unless you are chosen by God.

*Revelation 13:8 (ESV) and all who dwell on earth will worship it, **everyone whose name has not been written before the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who was slain.***

That means metaphorically there is a book, if your name is not in book then you will worship the beast, very-very clear.

*Ephesians 1:4-5 (ESV) even as he **chose us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he **predestined us** for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,*

*Ephesians 1:11 (ESV) In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been **predestined** according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,*

So predestination is a wider term, election is a momentary episode. Millions of years ago he elected you or he chose you. Predestination is entire process, he makes sure you are born, you have a life, you accepted him as Lord and Saviour, you persevere, you die, you go to glory, everything is covered by predestination. That means he determined every aspect, he determines who you are going to marry also. He determines where you live, everything is determined. So therefore we have two blessings: Election and predestination

### **How do you apply this in our lives?**

It provides three things; comfort, praise and evangelism.

#### **1. Comfort:**

*"in everything God works for good with those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28),*

Comfort why because you know every time you are in prison, every time something bad happens to you, you will remember before a million years ago God chose me. Do you think anything bad is going to happen to you that will make you lose your salvation? No, because God chose you that is the comfort that you actually have.

One of things that give us comfort is that, whether we are ugly or beautiful we are chosen by God. Which means when you become old and ugly, God will not abandon you, because God choose you when you were ugly. So some of us who think we are ugly and still got married that's grace. God choose us by grace.

## **2. Praise:**

*He destined us in love to be his sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace"*

So this is great opportunity to praise God. He is telling us how great it is to be chosen before the foundation of the world. This means we are so special that before the world started God called you already and this is great praise, we are honoured, we have gratitude and we have got humility due to the fact that out of all people God chose you. You are similar to all other people in the world and yet God chose you. And the three of these things will work towards the fact that we should be holy and blameless before him. That's how it works. Because he chose you, because you are worth nothing, you bring nothing to the table it makes you so honoured, so grateful and so humble that we will want to be like him, holy and blameless before him. That's how it works. We do not become holy and blameless and follow the rules because we want to go to heaven, you don't do that, you do that because you are so honoured, so grateful and so humble that God choose you for this special purpose.

The Wrong application is that, if God has elected us, God predestined us, I don't want to do anything. Let me give you an example, if you and your father went for camping, it is a very cold place and your father tells you to chop some wood. After a while when your father comes back, you didn't chop the wood. The father asks, why you didn't chop the wood. You will say, I know father if I don't chop you will chop, no problem. It is just like some of us, God elected us, cannot lose. So why you bother, become good and all that rubbish.

What is the motivation for you to not cut the wood, because of fear. He does it only because of fear. He doesn't do it out of love. When the father asked you to chop the wood, he is inviting you to be a partner with him, because you love him and you are going to join with him to cut woods, so that both of you will stay alive. On the other hand, the motivation is fear and fear is not love. So therefore, we praise God and that is the ability for us to become holy and blameless.

## **3. Evangelism:**

Some people say that some people are called to be saved, some people not called to be save, so why to waste time, don't share gospel. But the point is Paul writes *I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation in Christ Jesus with its eternal glory" (2 Tim. 2:10).*

Which means there are certain people whom God is going to call, they are the elect and I will do whatever it takes because God will call them and they will guarantee come to know Jesus Christ. So understanding election and predestination means, we are confident that the gospel go out, it surely will touch, the people who believe will be the one that have been chosen and the people who don't believe that's another story.

If God has planned everything, predestined everything, does that make us robot, I think that's a big question to ask. Do we have free will? Free will is choosing what I want to believe. So the trouble is nobody will choose God,

*Romans 3:10-12 (ESV) 10 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one;11 no one understands; no one seeks for God.12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one."*

So is there really a free will. You can't really have free will because you can't choose. Because if you are given a chance to choose, you will choose the wrong thing because nobody wants to choose God.

*Romans 8:7 (ESV) For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot"*

It means that if you are not a Christian, if you don't have the Holy Spirit inside you, you cannot choose God because you won't make that kind of choice. It is like you put meat and vegetables in front of a lion, it will definitely choose meat every time, nobody has to force it to eat meat, it will make a free will.

So basically what we are saying is this, if you have got 10 men walking down a cliff. They are all wearing blindfold, what God does is that remove your blindfold. I am sure, the one with eyes will not go there. If you are blindfolded, you will walk down right. If I took off the blindfold you will stop that's what happen. So in life we are all destined to sin and going to hell. In salvation, God takes off our blindfold and you see your sin and you see the beauty of Christ and you turn to Christ of your own freewill. So salvation works, God works through freewill. Man has the choice and God creates the desire in his life.

### **Are we not absolutely free?**

There is no such thing as absolutely free. A fish is only free to swim, if it is absolutely free it will fly away to the moon. Are we absolutely free? Can we be like a mountain goat? So there is no absolute freedom in life.

### **Why doesn't God save everybody?**

Nobody can answer this question to this day, nobody knows why he doesn't save everybody but we do know that

*2 Peter 3:9 (ESV) The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, **not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.***

So we know his heart, he knows people will die, because he didn't choose them but we also know his heart and he don't desire them to die. Somehow their free will is involved in that sense.

*Ezekiel 33:11 Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have **no pleasure** in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?*

*John 21:21-22 (ESV) When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, "Lord, what about this man?" 22 Jesus said to him, "If it is my will that he remains until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!"*

Jesus is saying that it is none of your business. So predestination and election is a doctrine where God tells you, you don't worry about the people, you worry about yourself and that's my grace. Mind your own business as it were.

*Romans 9:19-21 (ESV) 20 But who are you, O man, to answer back to God? Will what is molded say to its molder, "Why have you made me like this?" 21 Has the potter no right over the clay, to make out of the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for dishonorable use?*

So this is basically the sovereignty of God as it were. So we actually have God who predestines us and controls everything in the world, on the other hand we also have free will that works with how God works.