

Series: Ephesians
Title: Accepted in the Beloved
Text: Ephesians 1: 6
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Brethren, we want assurance that we are accepted of God. We often do a foolish thing. We know we should not do it but if we are honest, we will admit we sometimes do. We look for something we have done to give us that assurance: we look to our conduct since we believed, or how we handled this or that trial, or how warm our affections are for Christ. But God will not allow his child to find assurance in what we have done. God the Father will have us find our assurance only in Christ the Beloved. So instead of assurance, we keep finding things in ourselves which discourage us. So tonight I want to show you where every believer can find full assurance of salvation. It is in the goodness and grace of God our Father given to us before he ever even made the world.

Ephesians 1: 6:...wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

Verses 3-6 tell us what God the Father did before the foundation of the world. We have looked at these verse in detail because they are so honoring to God and so full of comfort for the believer. This last phrase in verse 6 tells us what the Father did by all these things: “he hath made us accepted in the beloved.”

- The “he” is God our Father
- The “us” are his elect—you and I chosen by God the Father in Christ before the world was made.
- The “beloved” is the Son of God, Christ Jesus.
- Here is the point.

Proposition: Before making the world, God the Father made each of his elect eternally, inseparably one with Christ and accepted us in the Beloved.

I. SOMETHING DONE—V6: HE HATH MADE us accepted

Remember, this verse speaks of what was done before the foundation of the world. Verse 7 speaks of redemption we now have. — “In whom we HAVE redemption through his blood.” Verses 8-9 speak of revelation we now have—“HAVING MADE KNOWN unto us the mystery of his will...” But verses 3-6 declare what God the Father did before the foundation of the world—and this is what he did in that work by his grace--“wherein HE HATH MADE US accepted in the Beloved.”

Believer, you and I, as well as all who shall believe by his grace, were made accepted, and therefore accepted, in the Beloved before the foundation of the world by God the Father. God the Father blessed us with all spiritual blessings IN Christ. God the Father chose us IN Christ. God the Father predestinated us to obtain the glory of that sonship which he gave us when he chose in Christ. Wherein—in all of this—before the foundation of the world—he hath made us accepted in the Beloved, Jesus Christ.

This was something done in eternity which can never be undone in time. This was done before Adam was made and before we were born. This is something done before Adam sinned and before we sinned in Adam. This is not something done by us or because of anything in us. From eternity, he accepted us as his holy people before we were born with unholy natures. From eternity, he accepted us without blame—righteous—before we ever broke God’s law.

Ecclesiastes 3:14: I know that, whatsoever God doeth, it shall be for ever: nothing can be put to it, nor any thing taken from it: and God doeth *it*, that *men* should fear before him

Application: God our Father did this before the foundation of the world that we should fear before him—not fear men or the devil and his bondage—but that we should fear God. It means that we should believe God, submit to him, trust him, be assured by him, that by his grace, having put us in Christ the Beloved, God the Father accepted his elect before the foundation of the world. He saves by his eternal grace so that by the power of the Holy Spirit working in our hearts we will fear him that what God has done for us shall be forever. God our Father did this before the foundation of the world that by the effectual working of the Spirit in our hearts we should fear him that nothing can be put to it; nor anything taken from it.

I pray for each of you here all the time. My prayer is that God our Father would give you this fear, enlightening your eyes to see how ordered he has ordered, and how sure he has made sure, our salvation in the Beloved. We will never have peace until we simply believe God. We will never have assurance till we simply believe God. In humble faith, trust the word of God. For each of his elect, God our Father has made us accepted in the Beloved. So first we see this was done in eternity.

II. WE SEE WHAT GOD THE FATHER HATH MADE US—V6: ACCEPTED!

The word from which “accepted” is translated means: “graced, highly favored, worthy of praise.”

Before the foundation of the world, in the Beloved, God the Father received each elect child with the same love and favor and delight that he has for his only begotten Son. Each elect child is the favorite of God our Father like Christ is his favorite. Christ said,

“Thou hast loved them as thou hast loved me.” (Jn 17: 23)

God the Father considers each elect child as worthy of his praise as Christ his Son. Before God our Father, we were holy and without blame before him in love in God’s eternal purpose and grace. “Accepted” means that before God our Father we came forth into the earth holy and without blame from our mother’s womb. “Accepted” means before God our Father we have honored and magnified the spirit of his holy law all our days, believing and loving him perfectly, as well as our brethren. “Accepted” means that our person, our character, our motives are all consistently perfectly one with God our Father therefore our God and our Father considers us worthy of his praise. That is what the word “accepted” means. BUT HOW CAN ALL THOSE THINGS BE SAID OF ME THE SINNER?

III. WE ARE ACCEPTED BECAUSE OF AN INSEPARABLE UNION GOD THE FATHER MADE FOR US IN ETERNITY—v6: he hath made us accepted IN THE BELOVED!

The acceptance of our persons by God the Father is not because of anything in us but because of everything IN THE BELOVED. Our great Savior has many titles but “The Beloved” is a title of love and unity. When God the Father put his elect in Christ, God our Father put the beauty of his beloved Son on us and from eternity God the Father saw us, and see us, with the beauty of the Beloved upon us. Therefore, God the Father accepted us, and accepts us, in the BELOVED. Everything I said about the way God sees us and accepts us is so of us because it is so of the Beloved. It is put like this in Ezekiel:

"And thy renown went forth among the heathen for thy beauty; for it was perfect through my comeliness, which I had put upon thee, saith the Lord God." (Ezekiel 16:14.)

The Beloved in Heaven and Earth

Christ is the Beloved in heaven and earth. Verse 10 speaks of “gathering together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:” Christ Jesus, the Son of God, is THE Beloved of those in heaven and of those on the earth.

Illustration: Golden child

In heaven, Christ is the Beloved of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit. The three in One are one in love and unity and Christ, the Son, is the center-piece of that love and unity in God’s purpose and covenant of grace.

Proverbs 8:22: The LORD possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old. 23 I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was...[he was there when all was made]...30: Then I was by him, as one brought up with him: and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before him; 31 Rejoicing in the habitable part of his earth; and my delights were with the sons of men.

In heaven, Christ is the Beloved of the elect Angels. Isaiah saw the Beloved on his throne in heaven, he said,

Isaiah 6: 2: Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. 3: And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory.

In heaven and on earth, Christ Jesus is “the Beloved” of his saints.

Song of Solomon 6:3: I am my beloveds, and my beloved is mine; Song of Solomon 7:10: I am my beloveds and his desire is toward me.

It pleased God the Father that the Son of his love and delight have all preeminence. Therefore, all eyes and all praise in heaven and earth is upon Christ Jesus the Beloved.

The Beloved Was Accepted and the Elect Were Accepted in Him

Remember what accepted means: “graced, highly favored, worthy of praise.”

In eternity, as God the Father’s chosen Mediator, the Beloved GodMan Christ Jesus, was accepted because he is one with God the Father. In his person, God the Son is God himself. Before the foundation of the world he stood as one in union with God. When he united his Godhead with our humanity, Jesus was “Immanuel”, God with us. (Is 7: 14) Christ the Beloved is “the Son of the Highest.” (Lk 1: 32) Christ the Beloved is “Wonderful, Counsellor the Mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9: 6) He is “the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” (Col 2: 9) Therefore before the foundation of the world, the Beloved was eternally accepted of God our Father and the elect of God the Father were accepted in him. (Jn 17: 23)

God is holy, perfect and pure. In order to be accepted one must be as perfect and pure as God. (Lev 22: 21; Gen 17: 21; Deut 18: 13) From eternity, Christ is the holy High Priest: “holy, harmless, and undefiled, and separate from sinners.” (Heb 7: 26) When he walked this earth, Christ Jesus “knew no sin.” (2 Cor 5: 21) He said, “The prince of this world cometh, but hath nothing in me.” (Jn 14: 30) Therefore, in eternity God accepted him as holy and accepted us in him as perfectly holy and without blame. (Eph 1: 4)

“God is love.” (1 Jn 4: 8, 16) In order to be accepted of God, one must be love and love perfectly. The Beloved, Christ Jesus, is love. His motives for which he entered into covenant as our Surety was perfect, selfless love for his Father and his people. Love made him willing to be made of a woman, love made him

willing to be made under the law, love made his life perfect. Christ was Love laying down his life for his brethren. “Though he *was* rich, yet for our sakes he became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich.” (2 Cor 8: 9) Love made him empty himself for those who had no love to him; to take our sin, to bear our justice, to be separated from those he loved. Now, seated in glory he still loves, providing all for his people. In Christ we see the perfection of God’s love for his people. God is love and Christ is the fullness of that love. Therefore, Christ the Beloved was accepted before the foundation of the world and the elect were accepted in him as perfect lovers of God and our brethren.

God is faithful. (1 Cor 1: 9; 10: 13) In order to be accepted of God one must be perfectly faithful as God is faithful. In eternity, Christ was pure faithfulness. God knows the end from the beginning. (Is 46: 10) But even if he couldn’t, all he needed was Christ’s word because Christ is faithful. Christ is the “faithful witness” of God’s righteousness: “Even the righteousness of God which is by ‘faith of Jesus Christ.’” (Rev 1: 5; Rom 3: 21-22) In this earth, he was tried but he could not be turned or corrupted from faithfulness to his Father and his people. Satan tried to bribe him with all the kingdoms of the world, but Christ showed perfect fidelity to his Father. (Mt 4: 8-10) Christ was threatened by the terrors of men. Yet, Christ remained faithful to his Father, integrity and fidelity never wavering. He served in faith. The Beloved believed the Father’s promise that all the Father gave him, the Father would draw to him. (Jn 6: 37) Christ believed the Father’s word that the Father would justify him after he condemned death by laying down his life on the cross. (Is 50: 8) The Beloved believed the Father would fulfill every promise: raising him to the right hand of the majesty in the heavens giving him his Mediatorial glory over the church and all things. (Is 53: 11-12; Eph 1: 19-23) He is one in faithfulness with his faithful God and Father therefore, Christ was accepted and his elect were accepted as perfectly faithful in him.

God is just and right. “He loveth righteousness and judgment.” (Ps 33: 5) To be accepted of the Father one must be as just and righteous as God. Christ is the righteous and just Savior. He agreed in eternity to satisfy justice for his people because he loves righteousness and justice. When he struck hands becoming our Surety, he became the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. (Rev 13: 8) Christ honored and magnified God’s holy law, vindicated eternal justice, by no means clearing the guilty, even when he was the one who stood guilty in our room and stead. (Nu 14: 18) A motive so high was worthy of infinite acceptance before the foundation of the world. Therefore, Christ our Surety was accepted before the foundation of the world, as righteous and just as God is righteous and just and the elect were accepted as righteous and just by God the Father in the Beloved.

We could go on and on—for in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily—but this name will suffice: THE BELOVED! What a name! Before the foundation of the world God the Father hath made us accepted in the Beloved! “Accepted” means God the Father loved us and praised us and delighted in us from the foundation of the world because God saw all his elect adorned in the perfections of the Beloved!

An Everlasting Union

This union made by God the Father in the Beloved is a union:

1) Of election (Eph 1: 3-6)

2) Of legal surety ship. When Christ became our Surety, our everlasting salvation and security became a matter of absolute certainty. God and his holy law never looked to the elect for satisfaction, God looked only to Christ. And our justification was sure because Christ cannot fail so we were accepted in the Beloved as righteous before the foundation of the world (Is 42: 1, 4) Now, Christ has put away our sin on the cross and all who believe are justified from all things from which you could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Act 13: 39)

3) A mystical union. God's elect have been inseparably one with the Beloved from before the foundation of the world: "For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones." (Eph 5: 30) He is the corn of wheat which was cast into the ground to die, that it might not abide alone, but bring forth fruit. (Jn 12: 24) Now, he is risen and brings forth much fruit; our new life comes from him; we are the branches, and he the Vine. (Jn 15: 5) We are the body, and he the Head. (Rom 12: 5; 1 Cor 12: 20; Eph 1: 22; 4: 15; 5: 23) He is the Foundation, the Chief Corner Stone, the true Tabernacle and we are living stones in him, the building fitly framed together. (Eph 2: 21-22; 1 Cor 3: 17; 2 Cor 6: 16; 1 Pet 2: 5-6; Heb 8: 2) As Levi was in the loins of Abraham when Melchizedek met him, and paid tithes in Abraham, so was every believer who God the Father put in Christ before the foundation of the world. (Heb 7: 9-10; Ps 139: 16) The whole human race was in the loins of Adam. Therefore, when Adam sinned we sinned. But when Christ came forth and took flesh all the elect were in the loins of Christ. He took, not the flesh of the seed of Adam, but "the seed of Abraham", his elect, his seed. (Heb 2: 16) Therefore, when Christ obeyed, we obeyed in him; when Christ died, we died in him; when Christ arose, we arose in him; when Christ sat down at the right hand of the Father, all the elect of God sat down in him. In fact, God's elect have a greater union with Christ than the members of our physical bodies have with our heads. Our physical head can be severed from our physical bodies—not so with Christ our Head and his body. We are inseparably one with Christ. We have been spared, protected, converted, justified, and accepted solely and entirely by virtue of our eternal union with Christ.

4) A marriage union. Christ is our Husband and we are his bride. God the Father espoused us to Christ our Husband before the foundation of the world. In the figure, the Lord married Adam and Eve. Adam repeated what the Lord told him, "This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." (Gen 2: 23-24) Christ saw his bride in the transgression beguiled by Satan. In the figure, Adam saw Eve in the transgression. So in order for Christ our Husband to obey the Father, to uphold the marriage vow to his bride, he willingly took our sin, was made a curse for us and redeemed us from the curse of the law. Now, by his Spirit, we are again reunited, made one, with Christ our Husband, "Wherefore we are no more twain, but one flesh. (Mt 19: 6) We leave mother and father, all things dearest to us, clinging to Christ in vital union with our Husband. Our old husband, the law is dead to us and we are dead to the law. Now, we are under the law of everlasting covenant—marriage—to our first Husband, Christ Jesus the Beloved. Brethren, Christ our Husband is our Advocate with the Father. He is "bone of our bone, and flesh of our flesh," and he is "God over all, blessed forever." We could never have one better to represent us to the Father and speak comfort to our heart. What therefore God hath joined together, none shall ever put asunder. "Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord?" (Rom 8: 35-39) Brethren, we are to live to Christ as we husbands love our wives and as you wives love your husbands. In fact, our love to our spouse is to come second behind our love to Christ our Husband. Melinda and I were told by our preacher when he married us, "Each of you is to love Christ and put the cause of Christ before each other. This is the secret to a loving and happy marriage." We have both found it to be true.

5) Our union to Christ is a union that makes necessary our salvation. Without this union in the Beloved we could never be saved and Christ's body could never be complete as our Mediator and Head. (Eph 1:23; 4: 13). Therefore, God is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance and all shall by his sovereign, effectual grace. (2 Pet 3: 9)

Something to Take Home

So brethren, if God has given you faith in Christ, then know that our assurance is this because of what God our Father did according as he chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world—**he hath made us accepted in the Beloved.**

Paul says in chapter 3 that he desires for us to “be able to comprehend...the breadth, and length, and depth, and height;” of God’s love. (Eph 3: 18-19) Our text tells us the measure of God’s love goes beyond the dimensions of time. From everlasting to everlasting, our holy God and heavenly Father, has embraced us with unchangeable love and satisfaction—accepted in the Beloved!

Believer, always remember, we are no longer individuals, separate, able to stand on our own, but we are one with Christ—abide in him! In Christ God does not deal with his saints as individuals; he deals with you accepted in the Beloved! Outside of Christ, we are unholy and unrighteous; but in Christ, we are holy and without blame. So in Christ we are safe and secure from all harm. Abide in Christ.

Spurgeon: “You cannot drown a man’s foot unless you can drown his head; and if our Head is in heaven, we are safe. And he, our Head, is there.”

Christ our Husband and Head preserves those that are in him--“I in them, and they in me, that they may be perfect in one.” (Jn 17: 23) Even our whole lives—our worship, our feeble service and sacrifices to God—all are accepted in the Beloved!

Romans 12: 1: I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.

Whatever is done with a single eye to God’s glory is all washed and perfumed in Christ’s perfection so that all is “accepted in the Beloved.” From the first prayer of your heart in the morning, to time you spend on the commute listening to a sermon all is accepted in the Beloved. The days work you give your employer as unto the Lord often praying throughout the day is accepted in the Beloved. That word you spoke to the co-worker or the neighbor concerning God’s grace is accepted in the Beloved. The household chores you did for your family as you thought of his provision for his house, even loading a load dirty clothes, is accepted in the Beloved. When we gather at the dinner table where you thanked the Lord for the Bread from heaven, it is accepted in the Beloved. Reading the scriptures with your wife and children even as your heavenly Father has ministered to you is accepted in the Beloved. Thanking the Lord at the end of the day for the day is accepted in the Beloved! all these everyday things from which we sometimes wish we had more time that we truly serve him, these are things wherein we present our bodies a living sacrifice to the Lord. And all is washed to perfection and accepted in the Beloved. In heavenly places, from before the foundation of the world, he hath made us accepted in the Beloved!

So nigh, so very nigh to God,
I cannot nearer be;
For in the person of His Son,
I am as near as He.

So dear, so very dear to God,
More dear I cannot be;
The love wherewith He loves the Son,
Such is His love to me.

Why should I ever anxious be
Since such a God is mine?
He watches o'er me night and day,
And tells me, "Thou art Mine".

Amen!