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Main Idea: We are chosen in and by the Creator of the Universe, Jesus Christ. We are appointed and destined to a life of real purpose and vivacity. We have meaning and significance, because God deeply loves us and has a plan for us--a life that matters and a life with importance! Therefore, we should be grateful, have a love for God; we can trust and praise Him. This can transfer to a mindset of confidence and passion for our Lord and what He has called us to do. Trust Him and live for Him wholeheartedly. We can trust Him because He works out everything in our lives for His glory. We have an inheritance that is beyond epic! When we trust Him, we can better follow Him. His blessings to us is not what He gives materially however abundant that may be; rather, what He has given us is eternal! Jesus gives us His true Truth, His saving faith. His very life given is a ransom for ours. Therefore, our hope is in Him. As a result, people can see His work reflected by what He is doing in you. God can even use us to be a blessing in the lives around us.

Contexts and Background:

The Jews did not believe in a linear time like western/Greek philosophy; rather, they believed that God works through time and relationships and moves through history in stages and covenants to a climax. He will gather back the entirety of the universe and absorb it back. Paul makes the case that everything is gathered to His subordination. The *entirety* of the universe is permeated by God's rule that all things will come to God's subordination and ultimate purpose (Eph. 3:8-11).

Commentary—Word and Phrase Meanings:

- *Chosen/made heirs.* This means to “pick out” and refers to God's people in the community, who have a special guarantee and favor and who have a special personal and communal relationship with Him, as He had with the Israelites in the Old Testament. It is also in the form of a duty, not to receive salvation, but rather for us to respond to what Christ has freely and lovingly given us. Our Divine election means He ‘wholly’ chose us not by merit or worth, but just because of His pure and perfect purpose and knowledge, which we do not deserve. (See Ephesians 1:1-6 study for more info) (Deut. 4:37; John 3:16; 6:37, 44, 65; 15:1-16; Acts 4:28; Rom. 3:21-26; 8:29-33; 9:10-24; 11:4-5; 1 Cor. 1:1:2, 30; 2:7; Eph. 1:4-5, 11; Phil. 1:6; 2 Thess. 2:13; 2 Tim. 1:8-9; Tit. 3:4; 1 Pet. 1:1-2; 2:9).
- *Predestined.* This means “determined before”, and God is the only One Who can and does redeem us. God has a plan which is sovereign and eternal; God is not bound by time or by our feeble choices. Predestination also means that He preserves us with His Love! We have a personal plan and agenda to follow and a purpose that is God's. All Bible-believing Christians believe in predestination. If one does not believe this, one would have throw aside half of the New Testament in rejection. The argument in theology is not that it exists or does not, but by what means God uses to determine salvation, by His foreknowledge or His purpose. John, Romans, Ephesians and 1 Peter tells us that it is by purpose, human reason says by God seeing ahead. This is all about that we are deeply loved and pursued by the only eternal and wise God (Gen. 4:1; Psalm 90; Prov. 16:1, 4, Amos 3:2; Mal. 1:2; Matt 1:25; John. 13:18; Rom. 8:29-30; 1 Cor. 1:9; Eph. 1:2-14; 2 Thess. 2:13-15; 1 Pet. 1:1-3, 20).
- *The plan.* What is God's will? We are told with vigorous encouragement, to know Him, to be growing and maturing in our faith. To have confidence in God when life does not make sense (Psalm 119:130; Isa. 42:16; John 4: 15-24).
- *Purpose.* We do not seek God, He seeks us. We respond by seeking after God or after God's heart. This is not about salvation. This is about our intimacy with Christ that gives us a determination to place Him first in our lives and allow Him to lead (2 Tim. 1:8-12).

- *Hope in Christ/trusted.* This means a trust and confidence in Christ as our hope in all things. In this trust, we receive His favor, His grace and peace. God blesses us, He desires to bless us! When we do not seem to receive His blessing and favor it is because we are blocking Him; He does not block us. Our faith may be misplaced, our desires set askew. God is the God who saves, restores and blesses us, so what is in the way of Him doing this to and for you (Eph. 3:6)?
- *Message of truth.* Christ's work is credited to us as righteousness. God is God, and we are not. He is never changing; yet, He condescends to meet us with a salvation that is undeserved on our part and something He is not obligated to give to us (Gal. 3:6-9; Heb. 6:17; 11:9).
- *Gospel.* This means victory as in "God delivers good news," and that salvation is from, and only from God, and Christ as Lord. This refers to the person and Work of Christ, how He delivered us out of sin and into our new life. It is by His life and sacrifice that we have the Kingdom and abundance of life here and forevermore. This also refers to how God delivered Israel out of bondage as proclaimed at Sinai (Rom. 10:9-10; 11:6; Eph. 2:8-9; Titus 3:5-7; Heb. 2:3; 4:6).
- *Salvation.* We are saved by the Grace of God through faith in Christ Jesus. We respond with praise to Him for new life! We have worth, satisfaction, enrichment, entitlement and purpose because of Christ. We have a reason to press on in life and service.
- *Believed.* God's promises are real and effectual, but we have to see them, believe in them, and declare them in our lives just as we declare our Joy. When the early Israelites left Egypt and traveled to the Promised Land of Canaan, it required a great act of trust and faith. This was a prelude to God's offer of salvation and eternity. This is also about faith alone, in accepting Christ as Savior; furthermore, it is about what the Lord requires--our further trust and obedience (2 Tim. 1:12; Heb. 4:3; James 1:1-3).
- *Seal/sealed.* This means a mark of ownership or identifying the letter to a king's authority. The impression of wax from a king's signet ring, referring to sovereign rule, and here, God's mark of ownership and approval on us. You are approved by God; therefore you can surrender to Christ as LORD. We no longer belong to ourselves or the world. We who are in Christ belong to Christ! Christ gives us His full authorization and support and all must go through Him to be saved (Ezek. 28:12; John 6:27; Rom. 4:11; 2 Cor. 1:22; 6:5).
- *Promised Holy Spirit/Earnest.* This is a legal term meaning "deposit of first installment". Here, Paul is using a term like God gives us a deposit in advance, and the rest is guaranteed to come later. The effectual Christian life gives us a taste of what Heaven will be like--a foretaste of the feast to come. God sends His Spirit to save, indwell and empower us so He, God, is gloried and we have a Helper to make it so. The Holy Spirit always points to Christ, never to a person or event; He is never to be misused (Ezek. 36:26-27; Joel 2:28; Luke 24: 49; Acts 1:4-5; 2:33-39; Gal. 3:14; 4:6; Rev. 19:7-9)
- *Guaranteeing our inheritance.* This means we are "assigned a portion", something has been assigned. We are God's people, adopted by Him. God fulfills His promise and plan; nothing can stop it. (Hag. 2:5; Matt. 5:5; 25:34; Rom. 8:17-23; 1 Cor. 6:9; James 2:5).
- *God's possession.* God acquired us, 'purchased' and 'preserves' us as His inheritance to do His work and give Him glory and make Him known. We belong to God as His children. We have special status before our Lord! We are His! Our identity in Him must affect us personally and publicly, and we synergize into a community (Gen. 12:1-3; Deut. 7:6; 32:9; Psalm 33:12; 1 Thess. 5:9; 2 Thess. 2:14; 1 Pet. 2:9; Rev. 1:6; 5:10; 20:6).

Devotional Thoughts and Applications:

How have we responded to our salvation? Our call is to respond out of our love, which comes from the grace Christ provided because of our sin! Our response is to yield to Him out of our new life and obey Him, not because of insistence or feeling, but out of gratitude and fact. Our character must reflect this new nature and the leading of the Holy Spirit, both publicly and privately. We are to walk in the Spirit and walk away from our sinful desires. Our obligation is implicit dependence on Christ as Lord, our struggle is in the releasing of our will, plans, and ideas, and our surrender to His Lordship and love (Mark 7:18-23).

God is our strength, our vision, our life's blood regardless of our understanding. Consider that our faith must be of great value for our Lord to go through all this He did not have to. He loves us! Our faith is pleasing to Him when active. Because we are accepted, our faith is not to be as spectators to our lives; our faith in Christ must be engaged with our best means for God's glory for all things in our lives, school, work, family, ministry, and relating to others. Our faith and actions must all glorify our Lord!

Church Leadership Tip: We are called to be agents of reconciliation to a world that is dying to sin! We are to proclaim that people's lives matter. The world is a mess because most people do not know that God accepts us by His sacrifice for our sins! Because of His work, we are deeply loved and complete in Him, and we do not need to have acceptance by any other person or means to be fulfilled (Rom. 5:1; Col. 1:21-22; 2:13-15; Heb.13: 15-16; James 1:4; 1 John 4:9-11)!

The Essential Inductive Questions (for more Inductive questions, see Inductive Bible Study):

1. What does this passage say?
2. What does this passage mean?
3. What is God telling me?
4. How am I encouraged and strengthened?
5. Is there sin in my life for which confession and repentance is needed?
6. How can I be changed, so I can learn and grow?
7. What is in the way of these precepts affecting me? What is in the way of my listening to God?
8. How does this apply to me? What will I do about it?
9. What can I model and teach?
10. What does God want me to share with someone?

Additional Questions:

1. What do you think is the purpose for your life? Why are you here on this earth?
2. How have you responded to your salvation?
3. How do you feel that you have a life worth saving? That you matter? What will you do with that? What happened when we do not see our worth?
4. As a Christian, we are appointed and destined to a life of real purpose and vivacity. What does that mean in your life now? What can you do to size it more?
5. Why should we be grateful for our salvation? What does a love for God look like? How does our trust in God help us praise Him?

6. God deeply loves us and has a plan for us. So how does this help you have a life that matters?
7. What happens when your church leadership does not recognize its congregation's importance?
8. How are you seeking after God or after God's heart? What does that mean? How does this help us grow our intimacy in Christ?
9. How is your faith strengthened by the fact that God deeply loves you and has a plan for you? How will this help build a life that matters and a life with importance?
10. What needs to take place, if it has not happened yet, a determination to place Christ first in your life and allow Him to lead?
11. What can you do for others to see God's work reflected by what He is doing in you? How will this help you be a better use and be a blessing in the lives around us?
12. What does your church need to do to motivate its people in growing a better intimacy in Christ? What will that do?

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