

The Parish VISITOR



"Be Transformed...By the renewing of your minds." - Romans 12:2 - NIV

Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood
4011 Clinton St., Los Angeles, CA 90004-2298
The REV. STEPHEN M. BAROLDY, Pastor

cpchollywood.org

**MARCH
2023**

VOL. LXXV11 NO. 3



**JOIN US AT
CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH OF HOLLYWOOD**

In addition to the in-person worship, we continue to stream the service on Zoom for those unable to attend in-person.

The invitation for joining the service can be found at the events page on our website at cpchollywood.org.

You can send in your prayer requests PRIOR to the service via email to sbaroldy@gmail.com or text at 323-202-5078.

This morning we continue our series on the book of Ephesians. There are so many incredible truths contained in this book. I look forward to sharing them with you.

Chosen, Eph. 1:4, Originally given on 052222 at CPC

Introduction: This morning we will talk about Eph. 1:4.

First, let me give you a little personal background about this verse. I still

vividly remember being in a small church in Bandera, Texas, sitting in the front row, listening to Pastor Malcolm Smith teach on this verse. As he unpacked this verse, and revelation exploded in my spirit, tears started rolling down my cheeks.

This verse literally changed my understanding of God. It changed my understanding of who I am in Jesus Christ. It changed how I preach, and how I interpret scripture.

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Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood is an intentional, healing community; proclaiming and demonstrating the wholeness of life offered in JESUS CHRIST.

"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, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."

(EPHESIANS 1:3-4, ESV)



I didn't hear much of the teaching the rest of the day because I was still working through the revelation the Holy Spirit gave me through Malcolm's teaching. And my prayer for this morning is that it will have the same impact on you. Amen! The title of this morning's message is "Chosen."

Chosen: Let me begin by re-reading Eph. 1:3-4. *"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, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."* (Ephesians 1:3-4, ESV)

The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed us, in Christ, with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Or you could say "God has blessed us in the Lord Jesus Christ with every blessing that comes from the Holy Spirit." Both convey the revelation Paul is sharing.

Paul, then, begins to list the blessings. And, he begins with this spiritual blessing. *"Even as he [the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ] chose us in him [in Jesus Christ] before the foundation of the world. . . ."*

"Even as he [the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ] chose us in him [in Jesus Christ]." Why did the Holy Spirit have Paul list this spiritual blessing first? Because this spiritual blessing expresses the wonder of the gospel. This spiritual blessing makes all the other spiritual blessings possible.

At the beginning of Paul's outburst of praise, he tells us something priceless. He tells us something we can meditate on for the rest of our life. Paul tells us the amazing truth that God chooses us. We are chosen by God. You are chosen by God. I am chosen by God.

Chosen! Let that word sink in for a few moments. Chosen.

How does it feel to be chosen? I remember how good it felt when I was chosen, among a group of applicants, for a great secular job. I remember how special it felt when I was chosen as your pastor.

I remember how wonderful I felt when our daughters were chosen for special awards at school. Or when Simone was chosen for an award at Fuller for being a wonderful example of serving the Fuller community. Chosen! It feels great to be chosen, doesn't it?

I also remember how painful it was when I was not chosen. Not chosen for the baseball team. Not chosen for the promotion. Can you relate?

Here, Paul tells us we are chosen. And not by anybody. We are chosen by God. The God who created this universe chose us. What does this tell us about our worth? What does this tell us about how God feels about us?

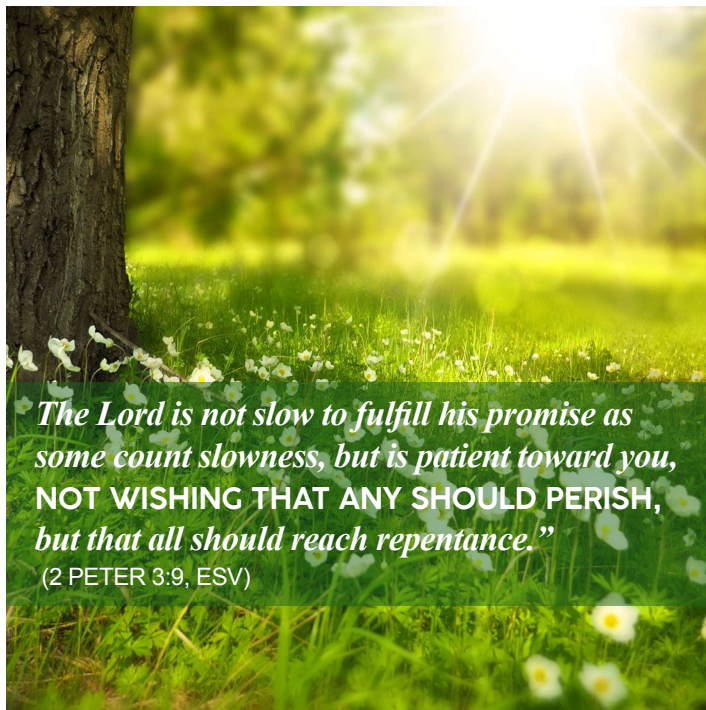
That God chooses us gives us incredible security. Why? Because our salvation is not grounded in ourselves. It is not grounded in anything we do, or don't do. Our salvation is grounded in the free, gracious choice of God. God chose us. Our salvation is dependent on him. Isn't that liberating?

Think of Paul. Paul terrorized the early church. Paul arrested followers of Jesus, many of whom were tortured and killed. Yet, God chose Paul.

And, our gracious God revealed himself to Paul on the Damascus road. And that changed everything for Paul. Maybe this is why Paul begins with this spiritual blessing. Paul is overwhelmed that God still chose him after all he had done.

And I was overwhelmed that beautiful morning in Bandera, Texas, when I realized God chose me, in spite of all I have done. Are you overwhelmed God chose you after all you've done? We are chosen.

Yet, now, I need to clear something up. God choosing us



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.”

(2 PETER 3:9, ESV)

doesn't mean he rejects others. Remember, God chose Israel. Yet, he didn't reject the other nations. In fact, God chose Israel so they could be a blessing to other nations. God told Abraham this in Gen. 12:4. God said, *“in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”* (Gen. 12:4)

God chose Israel, the descendants of Abraham, to be the womb of the Messiah. Jesus Christ, Messiah, came from the nation of Israel. It is through Jesus Christ, Messiah, that all the families of the earth are blessed. God chose Israel to bless all the other nations.

God chose us and he intends for us to bless those around us. Because we are chosen, we can then serve God and serve others. So, again, God choosing us does not mean he rejects others.

I, also, soundly reject the idea that God creates some for damnation as one theology teaches. 2 Pet. 3:9 says, *“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.”* (2 Peter 3:9, ESV) So, let's be careful. The fact God chooses us does not mean he rejects others. God does not wish that any should perish.

Yet, this does not dilute the joy that God has chosen us, in Christ. However, not all will respond to being chosen in Christ. God does not reject them. They reject the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Chosen in Jesus Christ: This leads us to our next point. Our text tells us we are chosen in Jesus Christ. This is critical. Yes, God chose us. Yet, God chose us in Jesus Christ. Which means God does not choose us outside of Jesus Christ. If you are not “in Christ,” then you are not chosen.

Eph. 1:9 tell us God's will and God's purpose is set forth “in

Christ.” God's will, God's purpose and God's plan all center in Jesus Christ. This is why Acts 4:12 says, *“This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* (Acts 4:11–12, ESV)

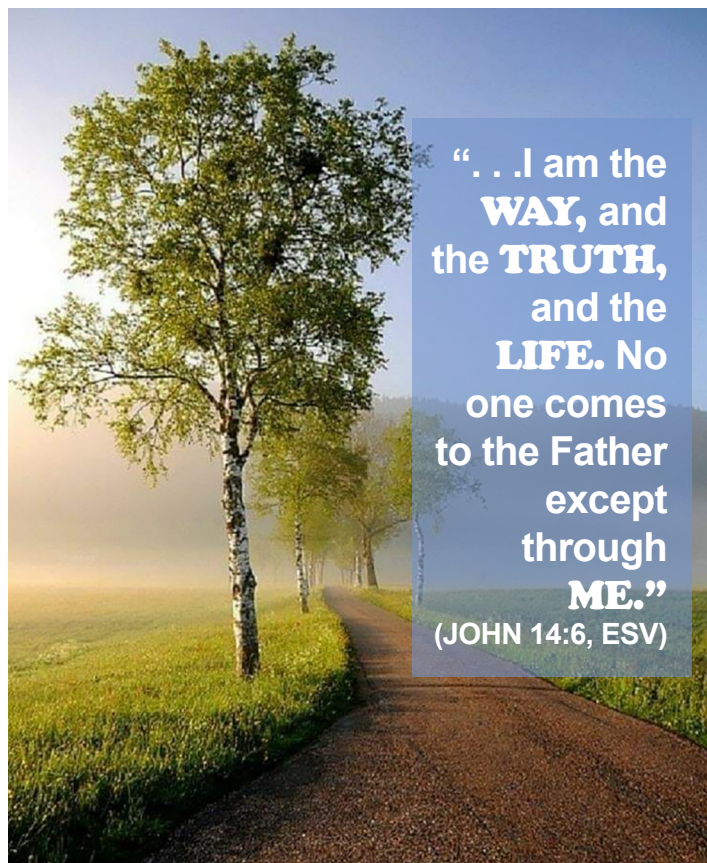
Those who reject Jesus are not chosen because *“there is salvation in no one else.”* Those who reject Jesus are not chosen because *“there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* Those who reject Jesus are not chosen because Jesus himself says, in John 14:6, *“... I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* (John 14:6, ESV) God's will and God's purpose is that he chooses us in Jesus Christ.

Now, how are we chosen “in Christ?” Eph 1:13 tells us. We hear “the word of truth, the gospel of our salvation, and believe in him [in Christ.]”

We are chosen in Christ when we hear the truth of the gospel, we repent of our sins, and we believe in Jesus. We believe and we chose to follow Jesus Christ. This is how we are chosen in Christ. Are you chosen in Christ? Have you heard, repented and believed?

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. Paul continues, *“he [God] chose us in him [in Jesus Christ] before the foundation of the world [or before the world was created].”*

Continued next page



“... I am the WAY, and the TRUTH, and the LIFE. No one comes to the Father except through ME.”
(JOHN 14:6, ESV)

God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world. This is another revelation that brought tears to my eyes in that small church in Bandera Texas. God chose us in Christ before he created the world, and before he created any human being.

Let me unpack this a bit. God decided he would create human beings with free will. When God created us with free will, God knew we would mess up. And it didn't take long, did it?

Adam and Eve only had only one commandment to follow. Only one. They could not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. And, yet they did. God knew this would happen. God knows the beginning and the end.

So, before God created the world, and before God created any human, Jesus Christ agreed to come to earth, in human form, and die for us. Jesus agreed to die for us before any of us were created. Now, let's pause and think about that.

Jesus Christ looked down through the corridors of time, and he saw you, and he saw me, and he said, they are worth it. They are worth my life. They are so valuable, even in their messed up state, that I will come to earth to die for them. They are so precious, I will give my life, for their life.

Again, let me ask. Do you understand you are so valuable, you are so precious, that Jesus Christ, the one through whom all things were created, was willing to die for you that you might have life abundant and life eternal.

Can you receive this truth? Will you receive this truth into your spirit? Listen, the devil will always try to tell us we are worthless. That God hates us. That God doesn't want to have anything to do with us. These are all lies!

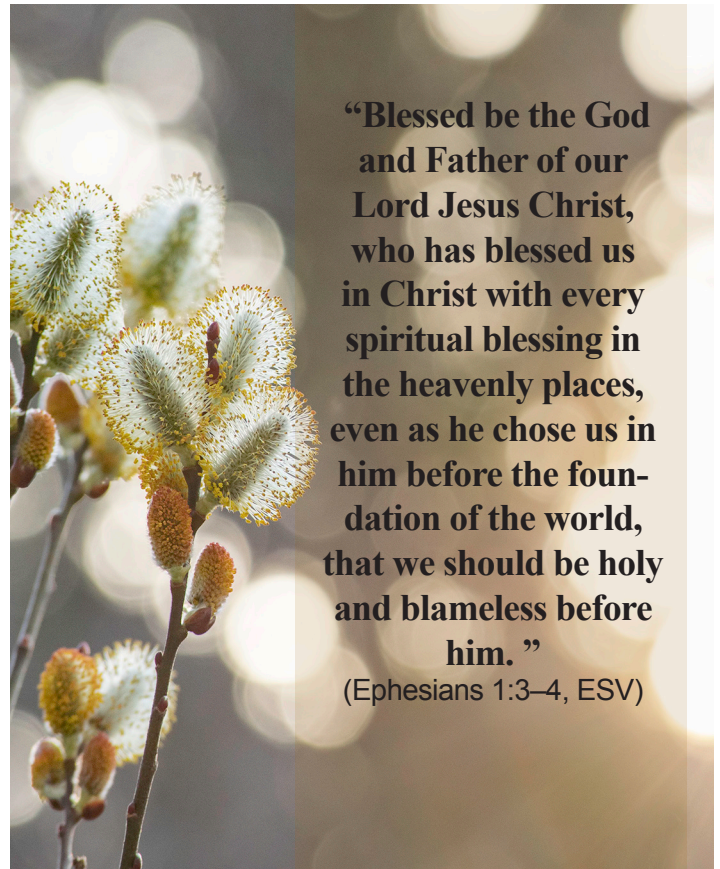
Do not buy into the lies. Do not ever think you are not valuable, that you are not special. You are worth the life of the Creator! You are so valuable Jesus agreed to die for you before you were even born. Let's just pause a few seconds and let that sink in.

Holy and Blameless: Finally, to finish this up. *"he [the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ] chose us in him [in Jesus Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."*

This is God's plan. *"that we should be holy and blameless before him."* God wants us to be holy. Holy means to be set apart for God. God wants us to be his special people. To be holy also means to be "pure, clean, and whole." We all want to be whole, don't we? Whole in body, whole in mind and whole in spirit. God chose us in Christ so we could be whole and complete in Jesus Christ. So, we can be all he created us to be.

God wants us to be holy and God wants us to be blameless. God does not want us to live our life burdened by guilt and shame. When we are "in Christ," we are guiltless and we are blameless. We become a new creation and that stuff we did in the past is removed, it is gone, and God remembers it no more. And we should remember it no more.

God wants us to be holy and blameless "before him." Before him, or in his presence. God chose us in Christ so we can be with



him. So we can be in his presence, now and for all eternity.

Again, think about this. God wants us to be with him. And Jesus Christ came to earth and died, in our place, for our sins, that we might be in God's presence now and for all eternity. This is how valuable we are to God. Are you living your life in a way that reflects your value?

This means giving up any shame and guilt you may be feeling over things in your past. God remembers them no more.

This means releasing fear and anxiety over how other people see you. Or how you perform. Our salvation is dependent on God, not on our performance.

This means walking confidently through life knowing you are chosen by God. This means letting God use us to bless others. By serving others and pointing them to Jesus.

Let me finish by quoting the verses 3-4 again. *"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, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him."* Amen!

See you next month,

Pastor Steve

What Does the Presbyterian Church say about Holy Week and Easter?

PALM SUNDAY begins Holy Week. It is the day we remember and celebrate when Jesus entered into Jerusalem as Savior and King. As Jesus rode a donkey into the town of Jerusalem a large crowd gathered and laid palm branches and their cloaks across the road, giving Jesus royal treatment. The hundreds of people shouted “Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!”

THE THREE DAYS OR TRIDUUM

MAUNDY THURSDAY is believed to be the day when Jesus celebrated his final Passover with His disciples and washed the feet of His disciples in an extraordinary display of humility. It is the day that Jesus spoke the words we hear at every communion service. It is also the day of the New Commandment, when Jesus directed his followers to love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. (*John 13:34*) On this night, he was arrested in the Garden of Gethsemane. On Maundy Thursday, we keep the feast that Jesus shared with his disciples on the night of his arrest, and we remember his new commandment to love one another even as he has loved us. Many churches have a foot washing ceremony and strip the church of all its banners and decorations until Easter.

On **GOOD FRIDAY** we witness the tragedy of Jesus’ suffering and death on the cross, where he gave his life for us and our salvation. Many churches mark the time of his crucifixion from noon the three pm. The observance includes the reading of the Passion story and reflection on Christ’s last seven “words”, or times he spoke from the cross.

The **GREAT VIGIL OR EASTER VIGIL** is observed on Saturday or before dawn on Easter morning. It proclaims the universal significance of God’s saving acts in history through four related services held on the same occasion. The Service of Light begins in the darkness of night. In kindling new fire and lighting the paschal candle, Christians are reminded that Christ came as a light shining in darkness (*John 1:5*) The Service of Readings consists of a series of readings from the Old and New Testaments, which retell our “holy history” as God’s children, summarizing the faith into which we are baptized. In the earliest years of the Christian church, baptisms commonly took place at the vigil. The Service of Baptism reminds us there is death and life in baptism, for in baptism we die to sin and are raised to life. The Service of the Eucharist recalls that we will come from east and west, from



north and south, and will eat in the kingdom of God” (*Luke 13:29*).

A new week begins with **EASTER**. On this Sunday of all Sundays, Easter, we celebrate our transformation as a new people. Easter faith recalls the past, especially the awesome act of God in raising the crucified Christ from the grave. Easter hope looks to the promised future, to that which awaits us. Easter love celebrates the presence of the crucified and risen Christ who is now among us, reconciling us as one people. Resurrection faith asserts that by grace we are born again into the new humanity of Jesus Christ. We are called to new life for God and for neighbors. As representatives of the new humanity, we walk in newness of life. (*presbyterianoutlook*)





Lord,
Hear Our
Prayer

**“Ask, and it will be given to you;
seek, and you will find;
knock, and it will be opened to you.”**

(MATT. 7:7)

PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING:

- Christ Presbyterian Church (CPC) as a people of God have entered their 100th year of community. **“A people called out to worship our Lord Jesus Christ and to witness to HIS Love for the world.”** There has been 100 years of continuous prayer for the saints near and far from CPC. And a crying out for GOD’s grace and mercy for those who are not yet saints.
- We are thankful! that “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence...” (Ephesian 1:7-8)

FOR THOSE WHO ARE GRIEVING:

In 2023 we experience grief as we mourn our sense of loss for those who have died in 2022.

“13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.” (1 Thessalonians 4:13-14)

- Tom Chinen’s sister, Irene, died the first of March. Out of 11 siblings there are only 3 left of which Tom is one.

FOR SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR HEALING:

- Sueko - for a physical therapist to be provided. Apparently, there is a shortage of PT personnel and an increasing demand.

- Brian - has done well with his previous rounds of chemotherapy but the symptoms are getting stronger with each round. He has two more rounds to go.
- Irene - in caring for her mother Harumi, is vulnerable to twisted back and ankles. Please pray for repair and strength for each day. Harumi, relief from headaches and the strengthening of her legs.
- Patti - healing and health in body and relationships.
- Alice - had a small setback but once again is in remission. We thank GOD with a full heart. We ask for continued remission and a healthy growth spurt.
- Phillip Nozaki – healing
- Jack – healing of his lungs

FOR THOSE WHO ARE HOME BOUND OR IN A CARE FACILITY:

Teresa Peterek (in extended care. Asked for pastoral care.) Leland Hayashi, Joan Janecek, Barbara Kashiwagi, Kimi Fujitani, Karen Koranye, Frank Morimoto, Janet Nozaki, Jean Sakai, Irene Mayeda caring for her mother Harumi. May each one daily know the comfort and care of our Lord Jesus Christ. And may they each be filled with hope and strength needed for each day.

GENERAL:

- Denise, Brian’s wife, please pray for wisdom for how to best to care for and advocate for Brian in this season of Chemo. For courage that comes from trusting in our Father in Heaven. For strength that

comes with the hope that Holy Spirit provides.

- Susan - employment
- Junior high boy, Santo, wants to be a gang member. Young Life leadership is gently speaking to him about how that is a dangerous choice and encouraging him to enter the Young Life community. Pray that this child would choose to be filled with the love of the Holy Spirit.
- Mako - still living at home alone. Thanksgiving for those who come along side her to make living at home possible. And thanksgiving for Mako's clarity of mind.
- Family and friends - hunger for righteousness: David, Frank, Caylee...
- Rain & snow – praise GOD. We all have been celebrating GOD's provision of rain and snow. We ask for His grace to protect those who have been trapped by the abundance. We ask the Lord to inspire and motivate our leadership to be good stewards of this abundant gift of water.

MISSIONS FOCUS:

Zebley family in Japan.

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. (Ephesians 3:20 & 21)

(March 2023)

FINANCIAL REPORT

FEBRUARY 2023



	<u>FEB. 2023</u>	<u>YTD</u>
Receipts	\$ 9,663	\$ 17,737
Disbursements	\$ 11,933	\$ 30,984
Increase (Deficit)	(\$ 9,676)	(\$ 13,246)

Gifts & Offering



We are grateful for your continued generosity in supporting our ministry.

Please consider sending a gift or donation to:

**Christ Presbyterian Church of Hollywood
4011 Clinton Street, Los Angeles, CA 90004**

HOW CAN WE *pray* FOR YOU?

If you have prayer requests, you can send them via email or text PRIOR to our service each Sunday. My email is sbaroldy@gmail.com. You can text me at 323-202-5078.

JOIN US
in Prayer



Join us in
Worship

SUNDAYS at 11:00 A.M.

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/384758031?pwd=ZnEySIBjL1VkuMhiTWRCREdmZVhJZz09>

Meeting ID: 384 758 031

Password: 351955

One tap mobile

+16699006833,,384758031# US (San Jose)

+13462487799,,384758031# US (Houston)

CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOLLYWOOD



**SUNDAYS at 11:00 A.M.
IN-PERSON OR ON ZOOM**

Join Zoom Meeting
<https://zoom.us/j/384758031?pwd=ZnEySjBjL1VkUmhiTWRCREdmZVhJZz09>

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