

THE WAY MADE PLAIN

EPHESIANS 1:7 • TV164B

A television broadcast sermon delivered
SUNDAY, MARCH 28TH, 1982

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Transcribed, edited and published
AUGUST 15TH, 2013

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Zebulon Baptist Church
6088 Zebulon Highway
Pikeville, KY 41501

Ephesians 1:7

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace.”

I would like very much for you to take your Bible and open it while I preach this morning; open your Bible to **Ephesians Chapter 1**: I am going to read as my text **verse 7**; now you listen to this verse, **verse 7 of Ephesians Chapter 1**:

“In whom we have redemption, (present tense as a possession, redemption, to be redeemed is to be justified, it is to be without blame, it is to be accepted of God); through his blood, (even) the forgiveness of sins.”

“We have redemption; we have forgiveness of sin, according to the riches of his grace.” It is free grace. Are you interested in that? That is what I am going to speak about today, **“THE WAY MADE PLAIN.”**

I want you to open your Bible to **Ephesians 1** because I am going to refer back to the Scriptures prior to **verse 7** and those that follow **verse 7**.

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Let me make a few introductory remarks:

Those who truly preach the Gospel, those who are interested in the glory of God, those who are called, anointed and sent of God to preach the Gospel, the first thing about them; now there are several things, but here is the first thing of which they are aware:

First of all: We are not equal to this task! When I say that I am going to preach on “**The Way Made Plain,**” I am going to preach the way as plain as I can make it. Now, that is what I am saying, “as plain as I can make it.” I am not equal to this task.

Paul said two or three times; “*who is sufficient for these things?*” We deal with the things of God Almighty. We are dealing with eternal matters. We are dealing with mysteries. We are dealing with the Gospel. We are dealing with heavenly things.

I see a lot of so-called, self-confident, cocky preachers, but let me say this; Paul wasn’t. He said, “*I am not worthy to be an apostle;* I’m not an apostle because I am worthy to be one or equal to the task or sufficient for these things. I am an apostle because God made me one. God put me into the ministry. God sent me this message.”

Richard Baxter said it well and better than anybody, he said; “I preach as one who may never preach again. I’m not indispensable; I preach as a dying man to dying men. I preach as a sinner to sinners. I preach as a man who needs mercy to those who need mercy, by Him who gives mercy.”

Paul said, “*I am less than the least of all the saints.*” That is the great apostle who said, “*He wasn’t one whit behind the chief apostle,*” yet, he was nothing. We don’t hear much of that anymore do we?

He said, “*Christ came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the chief.*” Preachers today won’t confess to be the chief of sinners. They claim to be the chief Pharisee; they occupy the chief seats; they have the chief office. But Paul said, “*I am the chief of sinners.*”

Those who truly preach the Gospel are aware they are not equal to their task!

Secondly: They are aware of this: that the power of salvation, the power of the Gospel, is not of us it is of God.

Now, that is so! The power is not of us; it is of God. All of God’s mercies are in Christ. All of God’s mercies are in Jesus Christ and they become yours and mine, not with a union with the church, not with a union with a preacher, not from the preacher’s hand or his blessing on you or the water sprinkled on you.

All of these blessings are in Christ and they come to you for a vital union with Christ, not with the waters of baptism, not with the wafer and wine at the sacrament, and not with you joining the church.

These blessings and mercies from God come to you by a union with Christ. *“You are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ, in whom we have redemption.”* You see, it is in Christ, *“the forgiveness of sins.”*

This union with Christ comes from personal faith. You believe; I can't believe for you. I can't restore salvation on you, the church can't, the priest can't, and nobody else can. You believe; that is what the Scripture says; *“He that believeth on the Son, hath life; he that believeth not shall not see life.”*

This union with Christ comes by a personal faith and this faith comes through the Word, from you hearing the Word. *“Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.”* The Word of God is preached and understood as the Holy Spirit reveals Christ in the Word.

So, do you see what I am saying? We realize several things; we are not equal to this task and we realize that power is of God and not of us.

We just preach the Word and the Holy Spirit still has to make it effectual to your heart. He has to quicken your heart and conviction takes place in your heart. *“The Holy Spirit takes the things of Christ and shows them to you”* and brings you to the place of repentance toward God and faith in Christ Jesus.

We don't lead men to Christ; the Holy Spirit leads men to Christ. We might be standing around close when the Holy Spirit leads one to Christ; we might have preached the Word and God used the Word as the instrument and the means to bring a person to repentance and faith.

You don't lead men to Christ, the Holy Spirit does. You don't win souls to Christ, the Holy Spirit does. You preach the Word. You pray for them and witness to them but Jesus Christ is revealed with the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is the agent in the new birth and the Word of God is the seed; you just stand back and preach it. We are nothing but ministers by whom you heard the Word, now that's so.

The power is not of us it is of God. No preacher has any power in his hands to bestow upon anybody; *“the flesh profiteth nothing; it is the Spirit that quickeneth and giveth life.”*

Thirdly: All true ministers know that all men will not believe the Gospel, (no they won't), all men will not believe the Gospel!

Christ said, *“My sheep hear my voice and they follow me and I give them eternal life and they shall not perish.”* But, the majority of the world will not receive the Gospel.

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Isaiah said, *“To whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Who hath believed thy report?”* Paul says; *“The preaching of the gospel is foolishness to them that perish but to those that believe it is the power of God unto salvation.”*

Most men are not going to hear the Gospel; they are not going to believe it. The disciples asked the Lord; *“Why do you teach the multitude in in parables?”* He said, *“Because they have ears but they can’t hear, eyes, but they can’t see, and hearts, but they can’t understand.”*

Then, in **John Chapter 12:37** it says; *“Though he had bestowed many miracles before them, (right in their presence), yet, they believed not on him; they believe not.”*

The Gospel addresses all men as sinners and this offends man’s dignity. He will not hear it; *“We are not sinners; we are not perfect, but we’re not sinners. Oh, we are not saints, we are not angels, but we are not sinners.”*

Yes; *“All have sinned and come short of God’s glory.”* The Gospel addresses all men as sinners and that offends their dignity. That is the reason they hate free grace.

Fourthly: Then the Gospel comes by revelation, not by human wisdom and that offends man’s wisdom.

The Gospel is good news, the work is complete, *“not of works least any man should boast”* not by anything we do or anything that we contribute, but rather it is finished, completed, and sufficient in Christ alone. That offends man’s pride; he wants to make some contribution to the salvation of his soul. He wants God obligated to him in some way.

Then, when we say that the Gospel demands submission, submission and surrender to Christ’s Lordship, that offends man’s love of self; *“we will not have this man reign over us.”* We just won’t have it! We will take His verses, His healings, His miracles, and He may even feed us, but *“he is not going to reign over us.”*

But, I will tell you this; where Jesus Christ is not Lord of all, He is not Lord at all. Now, that is right! We will bow to Christ and we will submit and surrender to Him by His almighty grace.

Every true preacher knows that he is not equal to the task. He knows that the power is of God and not of himself and he knows that all men are not going to believe his message. Christ said, *“The world will hate you; it hated me before it hated you.”*

It’s not you they hate, it is Christ; it is free grace and it is offensive. Paul called it, *“the offense of the cross.”* It is sheer nonsense to them who do not believe. It is a scandal; and it is a stumbling block and they are not going to have it.

Yet, we preach the Gospel. We continue to preach the Gospel. We do it for the glory of God. We preach it for the glory of God and we know that this Gospel is the only power of God.

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It is the power only of God and it is the power of God only to them that believe. This Gospel is; *“it is the power of God to everyone that believeth for therein is the righteousness of God revealed in the Gospel.”*

If you go learn anything about righteousness *“without which no man will see the Lord,”* if you are going to learn anything about acceptance, if you are going to learn anything about pardon and redemption, (*“in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sin”*) I am telling you this; you will learn it in and through the Gospel.

You are not going to learn it studying prophecy. You are not going to learn it trying to find out where Cain got his wife. You are not going to learn it trying to find out how many hairs are in the horses tail in the Revelation.

You are not going to learn it trying to find out how wide and high and long the Holy City is or whether it is going to be Baptist church in the bride or Presbyterian church in the bride.

There’s just one way that you are going to learn something about righteousness, *“without which no man will see the Lord”* and that is to hear and to study to understand and to preach this Gospel of Jesus Christ. That ought to be a warning note heeded by every person.

It may seem to some of you that I labor this point too much but I don’t believe that you can because I believe this is the very theme of the Scriptures, *“how can man be just with God?”* I believe that that’s the theme of Scripture.

“How can God be just, holy, and righteous, and justify the ungodly? How can he be clean that is born of a woman?” That’s us. *“Who can stand in his sight, he that hath clean hands and a pure heart? How can he be clean that is born of a woman?”*

“Behold the moon; it shineth not. The stars are not clean in God’s sight. How much more abominable and filthy is man who drinks iniquity like the water.” That is the theme of the Scripture; how can man be right with God? How can man be justified before God?

“How can he be clean that is born of a woman? How can God be just and justify the ungodly?” That is the theme of Scripture. I can’t labor it too much. It’s labored from Genesis to Revelation.

Satan is so subtle and crafty and so smart and intelligent, so much more than we are, that he sidetracks some of the preaching and has got them doing everything in the world but preaching the Gospel. He’s got the church members following everything in the world but the Gospel.

I read recently about a church in Georgia that has 68 basketball teams, one church, 62 softball teams, a karate gym, arts and crafts classes, sewing circles, and everything under the sun except the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Now, this is sad!

The Bible talks about God's essential holiness; *"be ye holy as God is holy; the Lord is in his holy temple; let all the earth be silent. Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty."*

The Bible talks about His holiness and His righteousness. The Bible talks continually about our sinfulness and the absence of true holiness in men. *"There is none good. God looked down from heaven to see if there were any that did do good. He found they were altogether become unprofitable."*

"Man at his best state is altogether vanity. He remembereth our frame that we are dust." What are you going to do about this?

The Bible continually talks about the righteousness of God, not His essential holiness but the righteousness of God provided by the Father, accomplished by the Son, and applied by the Holy Spirit. That's the righteousness!

Our Lord said to his disciples; *"Unless your righteousness exceeds, (your holiness, exceeds that of the best man on this earth), the Pharisee, you will never enter the kingdom of God."*

I don't labor this point too much. This is a charge that Paul brought against Israel in **Romans 10**. He said; *"my heart's desire and my prayer to God for Israel is that they might be saved. I bear them record; they have a zeal for God; (they are so zealous, enthusiastic, religious); they have a zeal for God."*

What is 1982? We've got more religion per square inch than this world has ever seen before. We have churches on every corner, I mean of every brand, sect, cult, and denomination under heaven that you could think of.

We've got more different recipes for revival and ways of salvation, a salvation that doesn't save and revivals that don't revive. We've got everything that man's ever heard of in the name of religion on this earth today.

We are in the greatest religious revival the world has ever seen. That's zeal; that is enthusiasm. Listen to what Paul said; *"They have a zeal for God but not according to knowledge for they are ignorant of God's righteousness,"* God's provided righteousness, God's holy righteousness.

They are ignorant of that righteousness secured by the obedience and sacrifice of the Son, the passive and active obedience of the Son. *"They are going about, (much to do about nothing); to establish their own righteousness."*

What is he saying? He is saying that these people have a zeal for God just like 1982, religious to the core. They are moral, clean outwardly, going about their rituals, ceremonies, duties, tithing, and all of these different things.

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They are trying to establish some kind of righteousness before God. They are trying to find some place to stand so that God will accept them because of what they have done, because of what they have given.

He's not going to do it because it is imperfect. The best thing that we have ever done is imperfect in God's sight. The best prayer that we have ever prayed is full of sin. The best gift that we have ever given is full of selfishness.

The best thought that we have ever thought is full of iniquity. *"Our righteousnesses are filthy rags in God's sight. In the flesh dwelleth no good. In the flesh no man can please God."*

There is no perfect faith, no perfect love. God can't have anything except perfection, perfect faith and perfect love. He says, *"They are ignorant of God's righteousness and they are going about to establish their own righteousness."*

They are not saved. They don't know God. *"They will not submit themselves unto the righteousness of God."* Listen to **verse 4 in Romans 10**; *"For Christ is the end of the law."* That word "end" is the goal, the objective, the consummation.

"Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone that believeth." Yes, there is righteousness; it is manifested in the Word of God. It is revealed by the Spirit of God. It is accomplished by the Son of God.

It's without the law. It's without my obedience to the law. I can't keep it, not perfectly, but Christ did. He is that righteousness.

That's what I am saying; I'm not laboring the point. I am simply saying that this is our problem today. The same problem that these people faced in Paul's day is the same thing we face today (your righteousness as opposed to God's righteousness).

Man today is ignorant of God's righteousness. He is ignorant of Christ's active and passive obedience. He is ignorant of God's only way of salvation. He's ignorant of the way that God receives sinners.

He is ignorant of God's justice and holiness. He is putting forth every effort to find acceptance with God by his works, by his deeds, by his self-righteousness, by his ceremony, by his rituals, and by all forms of religious nonsense.

He is trying to find acceptance with God and is refusing to come to God the one way that God set that forth to come; *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man cometh to the Father but by me."*

Our Lord said this; *"I am the door. By me, if any man enter in, he shall be saved and go in and out in find pasture. I am the bread. He that eateth shall never hunger. I am the water of life;*

he that drinketh shall never thirst.” Yet, He said, “*You will not come to me that you might have life.*”

See, it is no new thing. “*Who hath believed our report?*” Isaiah said it hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years ago. Paul said it too; “They won’t believe; they just won’t believe.” I say it again today; sinners will not believe left to themselves.

All right, let me once again sound this clear note that the way be made clear; Paul said, “*I do not frustrate (confuse) the grace of God. If righteousness come by the law, Christ died in vain.*” That’s pretty serious isn’t it? “*If righteousness comes by the law, Christ died in vain.*”

You give me something to do, the law, deeds, ceremony, or religion to find acceptance with God and God looks upon it and accepts that Christ died in vain. Now, that is so; that is confusing the grace of God.

All right, let’s look at **Ephesians 1** again. The way of life is God’s way of life. He purposed it, He planned it, He accomplished it, and He applied it, He sustains it and He will perfect it. “*Salvation is of the Lord.*”

“*It’s not of him that willeth; it’s not of him that runneth; it is of God that showeth mercy. We are born (not of heritage, not a natural generation), not of the will of the flesh, not of the will of man, but of God.*”

This is what Paul is saying as he begins this letter to the **Ephesians in verse 3**. He says, “*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus.*”

In other words, here is what he is saying; God is the fountain of all mercies. God has blessed us. “*God has blessed us with all spiritual blessings.*” What is he talking about? He is talking about wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. It’s all complete in Christ.

I am sanctified in Christ. I am redeemed in Christ. I am righteous in Christ and to understand the wisdom of God, that’s only understood in Christ. These blessings are the gift of God.

Paul starts where he is. He says; “*God has blessed us. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings,*” (that we need, all that is required, all that is demanded).

Now, watch the next verse, **verse 4**: “*According as he chose us in Christ.*” Paul takes one step back. What I am saying is that the way of life and I am making it plain today; the way of life proceeds from God. That’s where it begins and that is where it starts.

“*He is the Alpha, the beginning.*” The Lord Jesus Christ is the author of our faith. He chose us. You didn’t choose God; He chose you. That’s why our Lord said to His disciples; “*You didn’t*

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choose me; I chose you. You didn't love me first; I loved you first. You didn't seek me first; I sought you."

We have these blessings because God Almighty chose to give them to us. All right, he backs up another step: *"Having predestinated us to the adoption of children."*

A lot of people are scared to death of that word; I don't know why. It is in the Bible, (in the New Testament), 4 times, possibly 5, if you include the word *"foreknowledge"* over in **1 Peter 1:2**. Every time it deals with one thing.

I hear people say, "I don't believe in predestination." I say, "Well, what is it?" They say, "God predestinates some to heaven and some to hell." That's not predestination; that doesn't say that anywhere in the Bible.

God doesn't have to predestinate a man to hell; he is on his way to hell anyway. That's right! God Almighty doesn't have to blind a man; he is already blinded, he is blinded by his sin.

God doesn't have to condemn a man, he is already condemned. The Scripture says that; *"Christ didn't come to condemn the world; the world was already condemned."*

What the word *"predestination"* means that it is predetermined; God determined beforehand that every one of His people be like Christ. Read it in **Romans 8** and read it in **Ephesians 1: "He predestinated us unto the adoption of children."**

He says, "All my children are going to be alike; they are all going to be like Christ." We are going to see Him and be like Him. That is what predestination has to do with; it has to do with what we are going to be.

You see, God's blessed us. Paul starts where he is, he says; "God blessed me. I have peace and rest and assurance and joy and salvation. I have forgiveness and I have redemption in Christ." Why do I have it? How do I get it?

God chose me; He chose me. I don't know why, it was *"according to the good pleasure of his own will."* I don't know why He passed by this one and that one and chose me; I can't tell you; *"even so, Father, it seemed good in thy sight."*

But, I know God did. I didn't choose Him; He chose me. *"I love him because he first loved me."* That's how come I got these blessings, the Lord chose me. Then Paul takes one step back and he says, "I will tell you the reason He chose me, it was because He predestinated or predetermined that he was going to have a people and heaven was going to be populated, heaven was going to be inhabited by people just like Christ."

He predetermined that everybody whom He chooses and saves will be like Christ. That is what Paul said, “predetermined, predestinated, that everybody whom the Lord saved would be like Christ.” You can’t fight that; you are foolish to fight that.

I asked a man one time and he said, “I don’t believe in predestination.” I said, “Don’t you want to be like Christ?” He said, “Well, yea.” I said, “You believe in predestination.” That is what it is all about. Predestination is the goal.

Now, election means that God chooses people. He goes back a step in that verse and Paul says, “*He did it according to the good pleasure of his own will.*” You see, God willed it.

Now, if you start with what you have, God’s blessed me and the reason I have it is not because I earned it or merited or worked for it or deserved it or I am worthy of it or I did more than somebody else or that God saw what I would do.

I have these blessings because God chose me to them. He chose me to them because He said, “I am going to have a people like Christ.” God said, “I am going to have a people like Christ because that is my will.”

If you go back and start in the eternal councils with God, before the world began, before the morning stars sang together, before there was anything but God, you start with His will. “I am going to have a people; they are going to be like Christ. They will never come to me. They will be fallen. But I choose them.” He chose them and He blessed them. In Christ He blessed them. You say, “That’s deep;” no it’s just so.

Buy you a Bible and read it right there in **Ephesians 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7**. “*He accepted us in the beloved.*” He accepted us in Christ. You are not accepted in yourself, in Christ, nor in the ministry, but in Christ, nor in your law, nor in your rules and regulations, nor in your standards.

Well, all of these churches have a standard. They haven’t got much Gospel but they have a standard. “*We are accepted in Christ, in the beloved.*”

Secondly: The way of life is in Christ; it is by the work of Christ

The Father purposed it but the Son purchased it. The Father willed it but the Son worked it out. The Father thought it but the Son bought it. That is what it says in **verse 7**: “*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.*”

Romans 5:6 says; “*When we were yet without strength in due time Christ died for the ungodly. God commended his love toward us in that while we were yet sinners Christ died for us.*”

That’s my claim to glory; that’s my title to that mansion, the blood of Christ, the death of Christ, the obedience of Christ, the sacrifice of Christ. They all demanded obedience and He obeyed it. Justice demanded death; Christ died for His predestinated people.

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We cease from our labors and our works and we enter into his rest:

**“Tis done
The great transactions done
I am my Lord’s
And he is mine.**

**He drew me
And I followed
Charmed to confess
That voice divine.”**

The way of life is in Christ!

Thirdly: In closing; look at **verse 13**: The way of life is revealed by the Holy Spirit and it is received by His sheep.

Paul is talking about the Father’s work of election, the Son’s work in redemption, the Holy Spirit illuminates us and the Holy Spirit calls us. Then He says in **verse 13**, *“In whom you trusted after you heard the word of truth.”*

We are going to have to quit entertaining sinners and start preaching the Gospel. I don’t know who is going to start it but somebody is going to have to or this generation is going to perish without any hope.

This generation is going to hell resting on their feelings, their experiences, their tithing, their giving, and they are building all of these buildings with their whoop-di-doo religion. Somebody is going to have to understand who Jesus Christ is and why He came into this world and what He did on that cross and why He did it.

Reconciliation, regeneration, justification, sanctification, imputed righteousness and imputed guilt; these are things that somebody is going to have to start talking about or this generation is going to perish without hope, without knowledge, and without warning. Now, that is so!

Where there is an election, there is a calling. Where there is a purpose, there is a fulfillment. Where there is redemption there is somebody that is going to be redeemed. Where there is an invitation there is a response and where there is a Bridegroom there is a bride.

I want in on it! You heard, you trusted, and you believed the Word of truth. Have you heard the Gospel and have you received it?