

# My Favorite Thing About EPHESIANS

Ephesians 1:3-7

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By 62 AD Paul was a prisoner in Rome. While there, he wrote a letter to the believers in Ephesus. The interesting thing about the letter is that Paul did not address any specific problems nor did he call out a specific group like he did in his other correspondence. However, the content of the letter indicates that the church was struggling with the perceived differences between the Jewish and Gentile believers as well as with what it meant to live as a Jesus follower. So, Paul spent most of the letter reminding the believers that through Jesus they have equal status before God and that that status should impact how they interact with and treat each other.

- **Ephesians 2:8-9** - For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith-- and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God --<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.
- **Ephesians 2:17-22** - He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. <sup>18</sup> For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, <sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. <sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. <sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.
- **Ephesians 3:4-6** - In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, <sup>5</sup> which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. <sup>6</sup> This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.
- **Ephesians 5:1-2** - Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children <sup>2</sup> and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Which brings us to **My Favorite Thing About EPHESIANS ---- 4 words: Chosen - Adopted - Redeemed and Forgiven.**

These 4 words have to do with Identity – with who we are before God and it is a theme throughout Paul's writings ---- This constant reminding that man-made race distinctions, caste systems and lines of division have no place within the life of a Christ-follower or within the community of believers.

In Ephesians, Paul was speaking to both groups when he used the words *“you”* and *“us”* and *“we”* and in doing so, leveled the field.

It's important, at this point, to remember the context of the letter. Paul was not writing to the general population. He was writing to people who claimed to be followers of Jesus – claimed to have accepted Salvation through Righteousness by Faith and yet whose treatment of their fellow Christians was decidedly **NOT** Christlike.

Here in the USA, identity and self-image are very much intertwined with looks, weight, clothes, nationality, culture, money, # of Twitter and Instagram followers or Facebook *“friends”* or how much stuff you have.

Hollywood, fashion and the media have set unattainable expectations on what it means to be beautiful. They have edited and photoshopped their way into the national psyche – to our detriment.

Both young women and young men have been programmed to think that they have to look a certain way, dress a certain way, take a *“selfie”* a certain way, or be a social media *“influencer”* with a certain # followers in order to grasp that elusive golden ring known as popularity.

These Identity loops are dangerous and destructive because what happens to our self-worth when we experience *“failure”*?

- What happens when you wear something because you like the color only to be told, *“that's SO last year.”*?
- What happens when you've just colored your hair honey blond only to be told that grey is now *“in”*?
- What happens when your *“selfie”* isn't quite right or you are no longer as influential or your Tik Tok is weird and you get mocked for your effort? Worse yet....
- What happens when you reveal something about yourself or take an unpopular stand and you get *“cancelled”*?

What happens when we *“fail”*? The very foundation of our identity is shaken. We might become depressed, full of self-doubt or need therapy. We determine to never let it happen again, no matter how much we have to spend or how many hoops we have to jump through – because it’s just too painful to be on the outside. Then, horror of horrors, the *“ideal”* changes **AGAIN....** And because the ideal keeps changing, we come to see ourselves, to one degree or another, as perpetual **LESS-THAN’s** and the cycle begins all over again.

Religion is equally guilty of its own externally based identity loop and is, in truth, far more dangerous because it translates directly to our understanding of how God sees us. We may intellectually agree that the words **Chosen – Adopted – Redeemed – Forgiven** apply to someone... somewhere, but the mind is a long way from the heart because life experience has told us that there must be a catch --- and when Satan joins in to remind us of our unworthiness the voices become deafening ---- *“the bad stuff is easier to believe”*.

I was quite a rebellious kid and I can tell you, first hand, that the extreme pressure to conform to someone else’s version of *“proper”* Christianity is real and powerful and rejection can be soul crushing.

Today, we are going to take our 4 words, **Chosen – Adopted – Redeemed – Forgiven**, that we think broadly apply to someone else, and shoot them directly into our own hearts because they do, in fact, apply to us **PERSONALLY**.

**Chosen:** The word *“chosen”* is almost always translated from the Greek *eklego*, meaning *“to pick out, choose, select for oneself”*. Before we needed to be saved God chose to put a plan in place to save us... just in case. So, in that respect, all humanity is *“chosen”* regardless of the response. However, God’s plan benefits us **ONLY** when we choose to respond in faith, love and obedience. In our context, both Jew and Gentile were freely chosen by God to receive salvation. Both groups had freely chosen to accept salvation, therefore, both groups had *“Chosen”* status before God. **Same invitation.... Same response** – level playing field.

- **Ephesians 1:4** - For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.
- **2 Thessalonians 2:13** - But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth.

**Adopted:** Being chosen is amazing all on its own, but it gets better .... All who choose to accept God’s invitation are given *“son”* status and become a part of His family. Those who had once been rebels are now sons and daughters with all the privileges that come to a natural born child. **Same Father.... Same inheritance** – level playing field.

- **Galatians 4:7** - So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, God has made you also an heir.

**Redeemed:** Our adoption was made possible through God’s plan - the plan of redemption. That is, the plan by which God regained possession of the thing that had been stolen - **US**. We were redeemed, Hebrew words *padah* meaning *“ransom, buy, release; to cause the freedom or release of a person from bondage or ownership, often implying a delivering or rescue of a person in distress”* or *ga’al* meaning *“to deliver, save, avenge, buy back; to remove an object from a dangerous situation as an extension of being redeemed from indenture or slavery”*, when He paid the price for our freedom. By choosing to die, Jesus set us free from bondage – from the power and penalty of sin. That exchange – His death for our freedom – results in our change of status. **Same price.... Same payment** – level playing field.

- **Isaiah 53:5** - But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
- **Romans 3:23-24** - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.
- **Ephesians 1:7** - In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace

**Forgiven:** In a similar way to adoption, we experience forgiveness as a result of our redemption. Because of sin, our relationship with God was broken and the divide is as deep and as wide as the Grand Canyon. The goal of forgiveness is to restore that broken relationship and God, Himself provided the path to reconciliation. However, before forgiveness can go into effect, the sin that broke the relationship must first be atoned for. The Hebrew word used here {kofer} means *“to cover, ransom or payment”*. So, when atonement is made, a person’s sins are covered – ransomed – paid for. That was the whole point of the sacrificial system in the Old Testament - to instill in the minds of the people the truth that the sin they could not cover, would be covered for them. The relationship they had broken would be restored by the sacrificial act of another. That is Redemption or AT-ONE-MENT and forgiveness, *“restored relationship”* is the result. **Same problem.... Same solution** – level playing field.

- **Leviticus 19:22** - With the ram of the guilt offering the priest is to make atonement for him before the LORD for the sin he has committed, and his sin will be forgiven.
- **Psalms 32:1** - Blessed is he whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.
- **John 1:29** - The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
- **Colossians 1:13-14** - For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, <sup>14</sup> in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

You are **CHOSE and Beloved** for no other reason than because God wanted to choose you. The # of Instagram followers has nothing to do with it. Nationality has nothing to do with it. Gender has nothing to do with it. Religion has nothing to do with it. He just couldn't imagine eternity without you. Not only did He choose you He also chose to sacrifice Himself to make payment for your sins and **REDEEM YOU**, knowing full well you might choose to reject the offer. If you choose Him you are **FORGIVEN**, the relationship is restored and you are **ADOPTED** into His family. **Same homecoming... Same party!!** – level playing field.

- **Luke 15:9-10** - Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.' <sup>10</sup> In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.
- **Luke 15:32** - But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.
- **Revelation 21:3-7** - And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. <sup>4</sup> He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." <sup>5</sup> He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." <sup>6</sup> He said to me: "It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To him who is thirsty I will give to drink without cost from the spring of the water of life. <sup>7</sup> He who overcomes will inherit all this, and I will be his God and he will be my son.

That's why **CHOSEN – ADOPTED – REDEEMED – FORGIVEN** are My Favorite Thing About EPHESIANS.

**Ephesians 3:16-21** - I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, <sup>17</sup> so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, <sup>18</sup> may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, <sup>19</sup> and to know this love that surpasses knowledge-- that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. <sup>20</sup> Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, <sup>21</sup> to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

# You Say

[Lauren Daigle](#)

I keep fighting voices in my mind that say I'm not enough  
Every single lie that tells me I will never measure up  
Am I more than just the sum of every high and every low  
Remind me once again just who I am because I need to know

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing  
You say I am strong when I think I am weak  
And you say I am held when I am falling short  
And when I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours  
And I believe  
Oh, I believe  
What You say of me  
I believe

The only thing that matters now is everything You think of me  
In You I find my worth, in You I find my identity

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing  
You say I am strong when I think I am weak  
And you say I am held when I am falling short  
When I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours  
And I believe  
Oh, I believe  
What You say of me  
Oh, I believe

Taking all I have, and now I'm laying it at Your feet  
You have every failure, God, You have every victory

You say I am loved when I can't feel a thing  
You say I am strong when I think I am weak  
You say I am held when I am falling short  
When I don't belong, oh You say I am Yours  
And I believe  
Oh, I believe  
What You say of me  
I believe  
Oh, I believe  
Yes, I believe