

Saved, Saved, Saved, pt 2

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Bible Text: Ephesians 1:4-14

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Let's go to Ephesians 1. Let's continue there this morning for what we started a couple of weeks ago. I entitled this exposition of this section of Scripture "Saved, Saved, Saved." I think I told you that in my research I found six different sermons from these notes. Now, it doesn't mean they're all from the same portion of it but out of this section and it's amazing how you just can't exhaust a section of Scripture but this section is one of those that I think the Lord has given us that so lays a foundation, if you will, of all that we're about. Really all that everything is about. Let's look at it together again, beginning in verse 4 of Ephesians 1, going through verse 14.

4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him. In love 5 He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace 8 which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight 9 He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. In Him 11 also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. 13 In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation - having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

First of all, we talked about already the sovereign purpose and plan of the Father. You do understand that all things that exist and all things that are happening are according to divine dictate. Things just don't happen, God has a purpose and a plan for everything that is and everything that's happening and everything that's going to be and going to happen. It's all about him. There is a sovereign purpose and plan of the Father. Now, listen, his

sovereign purpose and plan centers on his Son and those his Son will save which will accumulate, if you will, for him a people that will know him, rejoice in him and love him for all eternity. So everything that's happening in the world, kings and princes and presidents and rulers and nations and everything else that is happening is all according to a perfect plan that centers in Christ those he will save. The church he'll save by saving those individuals and he will have those people with him for time and eternity. They'll know him, enjoy him and glorify him forever. So as Paul writes, he gets to the centerpiece of the overall purpose and plan of God and that is God's work of saving for himself a people to have forever, okay?

Now, first of all, the sovereign purpose and plan of the Father means he picked his own. He picked his own. Some people struggle with that and they wrestle with that and indeed it does rub our proud flesh the wrong way, does it not? Verse 4, "just as He chose us in Him," and when did he do this? "Before the foundation of the world." So he picked us. It just literally means to pick out. Now, this is review so I'll move onto B: not only did he pick us, those whom he picked, he predestined to be sons. In verse 5, he says, "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself." So God's got this overall, overarching purpose that for his own purpose and by his own plan he will, through his Son Jesus Christ, save for himself a people. He picked out those people before the foundation of the world and he picked them out that they would be predestined, marked out beforehand, to be sons and also in the text he says they're going to be holy and blameless before me in love and that's another reason why we believe in the perseverance of the saints or the eternal security of the believers, it's because God predetermined not that we would have the opportunity to be saved but that we would be holy and blameless before him in love. My security and my ultimate heavenly destiny is because of God's purpose and plan. Nothing could thwart that or change that.

Now, we'll move over to II. in our outline and here we'll talk about not just the purpose and plan of the Father but the sovereign procurement of the Son. The sovereign procurement of the Son. The Son brings to pass, provides for in certainty what the Father purposed to be carried out. That's why God could look at his Son and say, "This is my beloved Son," listen, "in whom I am well pleased. He has done what I sent him to do. He has performed my will perfectly. He has procured for me my children that I will have for all eternity." Getting in on that and knowing that you're one of those children is the most glorious, awesome, wonderful things in the whole universe. There can be nothing better than that. Now, think about it: if everything else fails about me, if all goes wrong without me, if all forsake me, my Father procured me through his Son that I would be his forever. That can't change.

Well, all of this centers around the word "redemption." The procurement of the Son of those the Father purposed to save for himself comes under this heading of him redeeming us. Look at verse 7, "In Him we have redemption through His blood." So understand again now God's great faithfulness and in God's great faithfulness he not only picked us and predestined us but he has provided for us a satisfactory substitutionary sacrifice so that those whom he did pick and predestine would righteously become his own. Did you hear me now? God couldn't just say, "I'm just going to pick you out and I'm just going to

take you all home." No, his justice is offended by our sin so for him to rightfully make us sinners who have offended his holy character, to make us righteously acceptable, it took the sacrifice of his Son and that is redemption. He redeemed us back.

Now, redemption is a word that comes from the old slavery system of ancient Rome. The word "redemption" means "to be released from the state of slavery." Now, in the ancient world and when the Bible was written about 2,000 years ago in Rome, there were about six million slaves. Now, think about that: six million slaves. Now, let me give you this side note: Paul is not making a statement about slavery pro or con, he's just using the system of the day to illustrate a spiritual truth. Six million slaves, always being bought and sold back and forth and if a person somehow desired to free a loved one who was a slave, they would have to buy them back from their master, from their owner, and then they would give them a written document stating that they had been redeemed and they were now free and could function as a new person and that's where the term "redemption" comes from. When someone outside of yourself paid the redemption price, you came out of the slave market and the slave man and became a freed man and that's what happens when Jesus Christ died for us. Christ was buying us for himself and for his Father from the ownership of sin and self and Satan and condemnation. That used to be our master. You used to be mastered by your fallen sin nature. You used to be mastered by the god of this world, Satan. You used to be mastered by the reality of condemnation that was your only just, eternal consequence. But Jesus, through his meritorious work, has purchased you out of that state and placed you in a new state, that is, as God's own beloved Son. You've changed masters. That's why the Bible says you have been bought with a price.

Now, your redemption price that you might be free was extremely high. It cost the blood of Jesus Christ. The ransom money demanded to loose Satan's sin, the world's hold on our souls was the blood of Jesus Christ. Let me read that verse to you, 1 Peter 1:18-19. It will be on your screen, I'm sure. "Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ." That's what was done.

Now, they also gave a written document to that slave that now you have a written proof that you are now in the standing of a free man. No longer the slave of anyone else. Well, our written statement is written in the precious body of Jesus Christ. It is written in his hands, his nail pierced hands. It's written in his feet, his nail pierced feet. Now, you and I live in this world down here and we are still struggling because we're still packaged in unredeemed humanity and it's still fallen so we still struggle down here but we should hold in our hearts and rejoice in our hearts and minds that though during this temporal pilgrimage there is a struggle, we are no longer under the ultimate mastering and control of sin. There will be a day when the unredeemed humanity will be stripped off and I'll be clothed with the new true me. You see, there's a new true me that started inside of me but is not all put on yet. I'll get the rest of it on when I get to glory. Now, I'm to be progressing down here but I'm going to be glorified up there and then I'll be the new true me that Jesus made me to be by his meritorious work on my behalf. He redeemed me.

Now, there are several parts to this redemption and the text kind of amplifies this out. My goodness, you could organize it a lot of ways but I think it's quite clear in the text. Notice some subpoints and all of this is under the procuring work of the Son. He's procuring those the Father chose to be the righteous children of the Father and he does that through redemption and connected to, or you might say a subpart of redemption is forgiveness of sins. Look at verse 7 again, "In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses." Now, forgiveness is a simple idea of just sending away. You're standing as a sinner and as to the penalty of sin, the pollution of sin, the power of sin and ultimately the presence of sin, that whole package has been put away. God no longer looks on you as one who is a sinner. You are forgiven. You're not held accountable for the consequence of your sinfulness or sinful deeds all because of the merits of God's Son, Jesus Christ.

Forgiveness is a glorious thing. It's not conditional. It is not temporal. It is not based on anything you do or do not do. Anything you merit or do not merit. When we have our fall outreach coming up in a few days, we're not going to base anything on what people do in five minutes after the preacher gets through preaching. We want to know...I'm not interested can you do something for five minutes. I want to know has God changed your heart so you'll live for God for five years or 25 years or 45 years, not just for the next five minutes. We've had enough folks who did the five minute thing and it didn't last five minutes after they left the building. But only God can change a heart where it's a five year thing and a 25 year thing and a 45 year thing or however long you may live.

Well, forgiveness of sin is a part of our redemption. Now, not only forgiveness but revelation. There is an aspect of revelation that comes to us. There are kind of two parts to this but it comes to us because we are redeemed by Christ. Notice what he says there in verse 8, "which He lavished on us," that's the riches of all his forgiveness and grace he lavished on us, look, "In all wisdom and insight." Now, it connects to verse 9 but I think it also means this: first of all, it means the Gospel and what God is up to – now listen to me, you've got to think this morning. You cannot sit here and think about the silly game, you have to think with your pastor this morning. God is expressing himself this way, "I have revealed," revelation, "my wisdom and my insight in showing what I'm up to and how I'm going to get it accomplished and what I'm up to is getting for myself a people and I'm going to accomplish it through my Son," and the world doesn't get it and the world thinks it's crazy and nobody really cares but God said, "That's my wisdom and I have revealed it to those who are my own."

So we gain, God's wisdom is made known through that glorious Gospel and that purpose to save for himself a people and the way he does it but also once you are one of the redeemed or saved ones, you begin to comprehend, you begin to grow in grasping the true purpose and plan of God. You begin to think with God's wisdom and God's insight. Now, those two words that are used in the New American Standard, a little bit difficult to define. Wisdom means the mind of God and the great intelligence, wisdom of God to think up a thing. Insight is how the thing was accomplished. Wisdom is the precept, insight is the procurement, if you will, or the practice, how he performs it. So once you're saved, you begin to grow in the wisdom of God. You begin to grow in God's wisdom as

to what is life. You begin to grow in God's wisdom as to what does death mean. You begin to grow in God's wisdom as to who is man and what is man all about. You begin to grow in God's wisdom as to what is righteousness and what makes a person really right before a true and holy God. You begin to grow in wisdom as to what is sin and what does it mean that man is a sinner before God. You begin to grow in wisdom in what is heaven and why is heaven there and what is heaven all about. You begin to grow in wisdom as to understand what is hell and why is there an eternal punishment of the unrighteous. You begin to grow in wisdom as to how important is time connected to eternity.

Now, you don't just, boom, get it all all at once, do you? I haven't. When I was in London, I had never been to Bedford, right outside of London, and Bedford is the home, as you know, of John Bunyan. John Bunyan was a Baptist preacher, don't tell anybody, but he was a Calvinist. And John Bunyan was preaching the Gospel of Jesus Christ, in effect telling all of those Anglican Church of England folks that just being sprinkled and being part of the Anglican Church will not get you to heaven. You must be born again. You must repent of your sins and believe on Jesus and then be baptized as a believer. You've got to understand, again, we're in the old world and all they knew was a church/state and so they viewed Bunyan as being a traitor to England and to England's church and to England's Gospel and to England's doctrine.

So they locked him in Bedford's jail. For 12 years he was in jail there for preaching the Gospel and while he was there, he wrote the book "Pilgrim's Progress." Do you know Pilgrim's Progress has been reprinted 600 times? It's the best selling book of all the ages second only to the Bible. And John Bunyan was all about that glorious truth of all this new wisdom God has given me as I know this Gospel. And the world didn't get it. The established church of his day did not get it. They had long since drifted from the truth but he got it. As a matter of fact, they promised Bunyan, "If you'll just stop preaching that Gospel, we'll let you out of jail." He said, "Then keep the door locked." Finally they did release him and no one knows who all of those magistrates and Anglican leaders were who locked him up but anybody that knows anything about Christendom knows the name John Bunyan.

Well, he had wisdom and insight. You see, when Christ lives in us through the person of the Holy Spirit, we gain practical insight on how to live out the wisdom God begins to teach us from his word. You see, the saved man knows what to do while you're here until you get where you're going. The saved man begins to understand, "What am I supposed to do? What is life while I'm here until I get where I'm going?" Well, the saved man has that insight.

Now, here's what's interesting: it's amazing how as you study church history and you study just history in general, how Satan takes these truths and he puts a twist on them. Have you noticed that? He's the master counterfeiter. He'll take great old Gospel Bible truths and he'll twist them. For example, this thing that God gives revelation, God gives illumination and insight to his children. Well, Satan twists that and here's what Satan says, "No, no, no, no, God gives true godly wisdom and illumination to an elitist few and you've got to come and sit under us elitist few if you want to really know what God is

saying." Every cult group in the world teaches that. Amen? Every cult group in the world says, "There are a few of us. Joseph Smith of the Mormons. Judge Rutherford of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Or the pope in Rome. We have unique insight and revelation from God. You don't have it. You must yield to us because we can tell you what God wants you to know." I'm telling you that is a lie. Every single child of God get the Holy Spirit of God and he shows you God's wisdom and God's insight from the word of God.

That's another reason why historically, not contemporarily but historically I love the Baptists because they stood in the face of the church hierarchy of the day and said, "We can read the Bible. We understand what it says about what is the Gospel and what is true conversion and what is a true church. So you churches can just go and chase all the fanciful things your archbishops and your popes tell you to chase and believe, we're going to go by the old book because God has given us the wisdom and insight to understand it." Isn't that neat? A 12 year old boy who loves Jesus could have the wisdom of God. Don't you love that? Boy, I love that.

Well, the world doesn't get this wisdom. Verse 9, he says, "He made known to us the mystery of His will." That phrase, "He made known the mystery of His will," means that what God had kept mostly hidden for ages, he exploded in the New Testament and opened it up to all. That God has a purpose and a plan to glorify himself by saving for himself a people which would know him and love him forever and ever and ever. He would procure those people through the merits and works of his Son. That was a mystery. The Jews had parts and partial of it but they didn't get the whole picture and then all of a sudden Jesus comes, God inspires men to write the New Testament and now we have this what was once sort of hidden and veiled, exploded open and revealed to all. He has made known to us this mystery that this is his will, that this is what he's up to, but only – listen – only – listen – only the elect of God get it. Only those he picked out and predestined get it. Well, that's not fair. Well, maybe God will be fair one day and send every one of us to hell. Amen? You want God to be fair? Are you sure? No, God is just and every man should go to hell in his justice and Jesus sits in heaven and calls to all and everyone, "Turn and believe. Turn and believe. Turn and believe." And not one will. Not one will. No, no one does good, no, not one, Romans 3. Not one. Not one! Not one!

So God said, "Well, I've always had this plan. There are some that I will turn. They all deserve to perish but out of all the deserving and perishing ones, I'll turn some and they will embrace my Son. And after they turn and embrace my Son, they will have to get on their knees and look up toward heaven and say, "God, I only turned and embraced your Son because your grace sought me when I was not seeking you. You turned me and you wooed me and you called me and you drew me when I wasn't seeking you." You listen to me, "For by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourselves. It is the gift of God," that includes your faith, by the way, "it is the gift of God, not by works," listen, "lest any man should," what's the word? "Boast." There will be no Baptist in heaven saying, "Well, I walked down an aisle, prayed the prayer." Quit boasting. Quit boasting. You believed on Jesus because God changed your heart. Now, I like walking down the aisle and I like praying the prayer but that's not the essence of the thing. It's the heart

that's changed that walks down a million aisles and walks down a million hallways and walks down a million streets for Jesus after he changes your heart. Amen?

A French philosopher, Andre, I don't know how to pronounce, Maurois, he said this, "The universe is indifferent. Who created it? Why are we on this puny mud heap spinning in infinite space? I haven't the slightest idea and I'm convinced that no one has the least idea." Yeah, unless God regenerates their hearts and then he gives them wisdom and insight. Amen? That's what Paul is saying here.

Now notice, Paul's a Jew, a converted Jew, writing to converted Gentiles and what he's saying is, "Isn't this amazing?" You don't get it, folks. You don't get it. For a Jew to be writing...I mean an Orthodox leader of the Jews to be writing to Gentiles and saying, "We're all one in God's family," that was a radical miracle. That was radical. So he's writing to these Gentiles and saying, "Look what God is doing. It's amazing what God's doing."

Well, there is revelation and then, thirdly, under redemption there is forgiveness of sins, there is revelation. We begin to see God's wisdom in saving for himself a people and how he procures those people through his Son and we begin to understand the wisdom and insight from God of what life is all about and how we're to live, that is obviously live for him. Then, thirdly, he says all this is coming toward a new administration. You were redeemed to the end that you might get in on God's great big plan and God's great big plan is to one day establish a new administration on planet earth. All summed up in Jesus Christ.

We're not living under the Obama administration. We have been living under the Bush administration. We may soon be living under the Hillary administration but one day, without shadow or doubt, this earth from pole to pole and shore to shore will be ruled under the Jesus administration. It's coming. Look how he words it there, look at verse 10, "with a view," not that phrase "with a view" means all this glorious stuff I've been telling you God's doing and how he's doing it is all summing up in this end, "with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth." In other words God said, "Not only do I have a purpose and plan to save for myself a people and procure those people through the merits of my Son Jesus, I've got it on an absolute perfect timetable." Did you hear me? An absolute perfect timetable. God's saving. God's saving. God's saving his people. I've been all over Europe and do you know what I'm finding? I'm finding people that God is saving and adding to churches and then one day at the exact right time, it's all going to come to a glorious climactic conclusion of the administration of Jesus on the earth with his people.

That's what he's saying here. He says there, "with a view to an administration." Now, he's not talking about a dispensation, that would be a different thing. But there is coming a day on the earth when there will be an administration established here radically different than any administration ever known to man. The cornerstone of this administration was laid when "the Word became flesh." That was the pivotal point of world history. It

marked the beginning of the end times or the last days. In other words, the final scene of world history is this church age that you and I presently live in.

Now, when he says, "suitable to the fullness of times," it simply means that there is that perfect timetable that is fixed by God and there is a time when this new administration is going to be established in the earth and it's all going to be summed up in Jesus Christ. In other words, there is going to be a uniting together of all that's God's and a cleansing away – now listen to me – of all that's not God's. Listen, all of the ungodly that is contrary to God is going to be swept away in judgment. All that is godly will remain in the new administration. You say, "How am I going to be there?" You've got to be godly. "Well, nobody can be God-like." Only if you're in Christ because he's God's Son. If you're in Christ, you are godly in Christ. It's through the merits of his Son, then you'll remain in that administration.

So, under his headship, all alien and discordant elements will be banished and at the appointed time he will come. He will have eyes like a flame of fire, the Bible says. Rod of iron in his hand. A sword in his mouth. He will destroy all that oppose him and he will establish his administration, an administration of peace and righteousness in the earth. Here's a good cross-reference for this, 1 Corinthians 15:24-25, "then comes the end," what's the end, where is all this coming to, where is all this arriving? "When He," Jesus, "hands over the kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power. For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet."

So, Jesus has procured and is procuring the Father's plan and when that fullness of time day comes, Jesus will say, "Father, here it is. I present it to you." And it's Jesus saying, "The wisdom, the beauty, the power, the perfections of your plan is so wonderful and I was so glad as God the Son to carry out the work and accomplish your plan for you." What's the centerpiece of that plan? You. You're the redeemed church that will show forth the Father's wisdom and the Son's power of procurement. You'll be a trophy of the Father's wisdom, the Father's insight and his Son's power to redeem for himself out of rotten, offensive, depraved sinners glorified, righteous children that will be with God forever and ever and ever and ever.

So, all is going to be united under Christ in that day. Now, I used to think, quite honestly I used to think, "Well, what's going to happen is when all this comes about, God's going to put back together what Adam and Eve lost in the garden of Eden." Well, in a sense, yes, but really no, not at all because what's coming through Jesus is far, far more glorious and far, far more wondrous and far, far greater than anything Adam and Eve knew in the beginning. Just as Jesus is infinitely greater and more glorious than the first Adam, so his administration will be more glorious and greater than the first Adam. It's going to be better than the first time. You say, "Man, I would have loved to have been there in Eden. Everything is perfect. No death. No disease. No sin. No ugliness." You can't comprehend it, it's going to be so much better than that because it's not built on the first Adam, it's built on the second Adam. It's built on Jesus Christ.

You see, because when Jesus sets up that new administration, God will have demonstrated before our eyes and before all the universe much, much more of his righteousness, his justice, his wrath and his righteous mercy, grace and love. The new administration will feature the bride of Christ, the trophy of God's amazing grace. Ephesians 3:21, "to Him be the glory in the church." To Him be glory in the church. In the church. Those people. Those people that he picked and that he predestined to be his own. That's the church. To him, he's going to get glory because by saving those people from their wretched sins and making them truly righteous in his standing reveals for the whole universe and the angels are just going to have a fit over this, it reveals to everything that, "Look at God's wisdom. Look at God's power. Look at this church, this righteous people." And we're going to be to the end of him getting that glory forever and ever and ever and ever and ever and ever.

Now, in verse 11 Paul shows that God's collecting for himself a people which he will procure through the merits of his Son from all kinds of folks. Verse 11 says, "also we," that's some of the Jews that God has chosen to save, "have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will." I love that phrase, by the way, "who works all things unto the counsel of His will." When God's thinking of stuff he's going to do, when God thinks, "I want to do this and how am I going to do it," do you know who he counsels with? He counsels with God. He does all things under the counsel of his own will. "Well, I don't know that I agree with all this stuff you're preaching." It doesn't matter. It just doesn't matter. I don't care because he only counsels with himself. He didn't form a committee and say, "Let's get our heads together." We don't need to get our heads together, it's just a big bunch of mush.

God counseled with himself and said, "I like this." Have I told you before God is absolutely thrilled at being God? God looks in the mirror and he goes, "Wooo!" Do you know why he does that? Because he can only be impressed with holy perfection and the only time he can see holy perfection is when he looks at himself. If he were impressed in anything less than holy perfection, he wouldn't be God so he's thrilled at his own wisdom. Now listen: and all the scoffers and all the naysayers and all the mockers and all the doubters and all the perverts and the wicked who deny him and push him away and reject his authority, he's going to even through judging them prove how wonderful he is and how true is his justice and how righteous is his judgment and how true is his justice and how righteous is his judgment toward his own children when he makes them glorified and perfected like himself because he caused that to happen through the merits of his Son dying on the cross for them. So those in hell and those in heaven will think will be to the praise of the glory of God forever and ever and ever.

So now, he goes on down there in verse 11, I'm sorry, let's see, in verse 13, "In Him, you also," that's Jews now, they're going to get in on being the people of God. That means we've got to share the Gospel with everybody. "Having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise." So, again, he throws out that phrase, "having also believed." In time and space history, men are responsible to repent and believe on Jesus Christ. Don't be a hyper-Calvinist. We believe you must urge, beg, command, influence

all men everywhere to repent and believe and if they will, God will save them and then we'll tell them, "He picked you before the foundation of the world."

So God is entirely responsible for the conception, the initiation and the securing of his children's redemption and then, fourthly, for the establishing of the final glorious administration in the earth. Now, all of this is why we're having Friend Day. All of this is why we're having fall outreach with John O. Simms preaching. All of this is why we're having a men's night and a ladies' night and a student night and a children. All of this is because – listen – do you know why? It's an old phrase, because we want to be on mission with God. On mission with God. God's about something. He has commanded us to get in on it with him and so on the one hand we go out into our community heartbroken that souls are lost and under the judgment of God and will be lost forever if they don't turn to Christ. That is a motivation, but the higher motivation is: God has ordained he will glorify himself by saving for himself a people through the merits of his Son and we want to see our God get more glory out of more people in the Shoals area.

So we're on mission with God because God's purpose is to glorify himself by having for himself a people that he will have and hold who will know, enjoy, love him and glorify him forever and ever and ever. He procured that through the merits of his Son and he'll establish all of it on the earth one day.

Now, when we get together next time, Lord willing, we'll talk about the Spirit's work in bringing all this to pass.

Let's pray together.

Heavenly Father, thank you that your word is perfect and, Lord, I'm humbled and grateful that honestly you told us more than we can grasp. Lord, you did not give us the brains to be able to wrap around all that you have even told us and it's just a little bit of all that there is to know, but we're in awe of it and we glorify you for it and we thank you for it. And I pray for Grace Life Church of the Shoals that we will rejoice that we can be on mission with you, our God. As the Apostle Paul said, "We are ambassadors for Christ." And Lord, we want to urge our friends, our spouses, our loved ones, our relatives, our neighbors, our work associates, our classmates, to come on Friend Day. "Come here, Brother John," or even this week, Lord, we want to witness to them, that they might know this great wisdom and insight and they might cast their hearts toward heaven and say, "Oh, what a God. What a salvation. How wonderful this is and how wonderful he is." O God, do that work no man can do and save those souls that need to be saved and glorify your own name and thank you for letting us get in on the process of seeing it all happen and we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.