Ephesians 1:3-14 (ESV)

God's Gift of Identity: Chosen, Redeemed, and Sealed in Christ

Theological proposition: The Christian's true identity is not found in what we achieve, acquire, or appear to be, but in being chosen by the Father, claimed by the Son, and confirmed by the Spirit -- to the praise of God's glory.

POINT 1: Chosen by the Father (vv.3-6)

I. God has blessed us with all the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies (v.3)
II. These spiritual blessings are unpacked more specifically in vv. 4-14.
III. God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world (v.4)
    a. His choosing is out of his will alone
        i. no respect to what we have or have not done
        ii. the choice was made before we had opportunity to influence the decision!
        iii. Also means no chance we can screw it up!
    b. We have been chosen to be holy and blameless before him
        i. Again, this was before we took any action
        ii. Being holy and blameless before him is a result of his election, not something we strive to attain on our own.
        iii. This positionally is secured for us by Christ!
        iv. Accomplished through the work and the power of the Holy Spirit
IV. Quick excursus on "in love"
    a. Some of your Bibles may have this phrase appearing at the end of v.4, others at the beginning of v.5
    b. Opinion and translations are split. Either reading is grammatically and theologically correct and would fit with Paul's theme.
        i. We should be before God holy and blameless in love, not legalism or duty
        ii. God's love is the initiative for his predestination
V. Predestined for adoption to himself as sons (and daughters)
    a. This is the dominant image Paul applies in this passage
    b. Ephesus was a significant Roman city:
        i. the capital of a wealthy Roman province
        ii. one of the largest and most influential cities in the eastern Empire
        iii. dominated by the cult of Artemis and wealthy merchants (Acts 19)
        iv. Pulling away from that to Christ would come at great cost
    c. Sonship was a big deal in Roman life

i. A biological relationship was dissolvable
ii. Adoption under Roman law meant that:
1. The son was freely chosen by the parents, even *desired*;
2. The adoption was **irrevocable**
3. The son received a new name and identity
4. The old name, past, and any debts were wiped clean
iii. An adopted son was fully united as an heir

d. This has major implications for us as adopted children of God
i. Our past is wiped away
ii. Our future is bound up with the Father
iii. We have new life to walk in
iv. We are empowered toward the goal of presenting ourselves holy and blameless before him
1. Position secured in Christ
2. Progress toward goal empowered by the Spirit

e. This adoption is according the purpose of the Father's will (nothing to do with us!)

VI. To the praise of his glorious grace
a. All of this is done to the praise of God's glory, not ours
b. This roots our identity in what God has done for us
i. Not what we have done for ourselves
ii. Not what we have done for God
c. This grace is extended toward us in the Beloved
i. Speaking of Christ
ii. In Christ we are:
1. Blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies.
2. Chosen before the foundation of the world
3. Adopted as sons and daughters
4. Blessed by God's glorious grace.

VII. This is cause for great joy! But that's not all.

CONNECTIVE: We are chosen by the Father, wanted, adopted, and named before time began. But this eternal plan required temporal action. Thus, not only are we chosen by the Father, we are also claimed by the Son.

POINT 2: Claimed by the Son (vv.7-12)

I. In Christ we have:
   a. Redemption, through his blood
   b. Forgiveness of the trespass (lit.), according to the riches of the Father's grace
   c. This stands as an antecedent to v. 4
      i. Redemption was given to adopted sons
      ii. Forgiveness of any trespass/sin
   d. This is a "marketplace" or ransom concept
      i. We were not free agents able to prove our own value
      ii. We were bought and claimed with his blood as the price
      iii. Our worth is tied up in the price paid for us

II. This is an outworking of the riches of God's grace toward us
      i. We were born in a state of cosmic treason (sinners by nature)
      ii. We then committed the act ourselves (sinners by choice)
      iii. Redemption and forgiveness was already ours to receive through Christ

III. God caused this grace to abound toward us
   a. Note the source (the Father caused this)
   b. Note the recipient (us!)
   c. Note the quality
      i. Abound – eperisseusen – granting something to someone in rich abundance or overflow (more than enough)
      ii. Root of Eph. 3:20 – hyperekperissou – hyperabundance toward someone beyond any measure
      iii. Same line of thought

IV. Brought to us in God's wisdom and insight
   a. This is not "reckless" love or grace
   b. It is divine wisdom to do this!

V. God made known the mystery of his will to believers
   a. Mystery is not a riddle, but something of great importance not yet revealed
   b. In syntax, this is tied to the causing of God's grace
   c. Thus this is the way God makes his grace abound/to be known
   d. This mystery is for us to know:
      i. According to his purpose
      ii. Having been set forth/achieved in Christ

VI. This purpose has been planned for (lit.) the appointed/right time
   a. The Father will unite all things in Christ at that time
   b. This verse (10) is the centerpiece of the passage

i. Christ has been granted all authority under heaven and earth (Matt. 28:18)
ii. This unity was achieved at the cross (Col. 1:20)

c. At the right time this plan to resolve all things was revealed
d. It has been achieved and will be consummated in full when he comes.

VII. In Christ we have an inheritance!
a. Continuation of sonship imagery
b. Predestined to that inheritance (v.5)
c. This predestination stems from God's purpose
i. God works through his purposes for his reasons
ii. All things operate within his will

VIII. The purpose is to bring forth fruit
a. The first to trust in Christ are the firstfruits of redemption
b. They, like all who follow, are to be to the praise of his glory
c. The firstfruits were always to be given to God (Lev. 23:9-14)

CONNECTIVE: So we now know that we have been chosen by the Father before time began, and we were claimed by the Son through his blood at the cross. How do we know this applies to us? Because the third person of the Trinity promises it: we are also confirmed by the Spirit.

POINT 3: Confirmed by the Spirit (v. 13-14)

I. We were sealed by the Spirit at the moment of belief
a. Through those who came before, we heard the word of truth
b. We heard the good news (gospel) of salvation (Col. 1:5-6)
c. Our eyes were opened and we believed (Ps. 119:18; Acts 26:18)
d. The Holy Spirit was promised to believers (John 14:26)

II. The Spirit's seal is the guarantee of our inheritance
a. The seal is a royal concept
i. Signet ring, placed into wax to create a seal
ii. Rings were uniquely identifiable to prove ownership
iii. Believer: God has stamped his name on you!
b. The guarantee is a banking/mortgage concept:
i. Earnest money initiates the possession process
ii. It's the first installment toward the very thing itself

iii. Unlike a housing contract, there are no contingencies with God!

c. Once sealed, it's irrevocable
    i. The Spirit will do his work (sanctification)
    ii. God will not lose any that are his (perseverance)
d. God will redeem his possession (us!)
    i. God doesn't just give *us* an inheritance
    ii. God views **us** as **his** inheritance!
    iii.
e. All of this is done to the praise of God's glory

III. Note the trinitarian nature of this redemption plan
a. All three persons of the Godhead have distinct roles
b. All three persons of the Godhead accomplish unique purposes
c. All three persons of the Godhead bring glory to God

IV. What does this mean for us?
a. Knowing that we were:
    i. chosen by the Father before time began
    ii. claimed by the Son through his blood at the cross
    iii. confirmed by the Spirit when we heard and believed
    iv. Should produce a response of praise and glory to God for his goodness
b. The Praise of His Glory
    i. Whatever we do, whoever we are, our identity is in what God purposed and accomplished, adopting and redeeming us to himself as an inheritance
    ii. 1 Cor. 10:31
    iii. Col. 3:17
    iv. Everyday life is worship, once we truly understand that God defines our identity, and not ourselves.

CONNECTIVE: When that truth moves from head to heart, it changes how we respond to God.