

Lectionary 15 B  
*You Are Not an Accident*

July 14, 2024  
Ephesians 1:3-14

DJ, the youngest child, was sitting at the breakfast table. He asked his mother, “Was I an accident?”

“No,” his mother, Roseanne, replies. “You weren’t an accident. You were a surprise.”

DJ thought for a moment; then asks, “What’s the difference?”

She answers, “An accident is something that, if you had the chance, you wouldn’t do again. A surprise is something you would do again.”

That was a scene in the old Roseanne show that I’ve remembered for all these years.

When children hear things like, “We had to get married because of you” or “I wish I could have finished college, but you came along” or “We thought life would begin when the older children moved out, but you changed that.” Such comments about an accident or even a surprise are likely to be heard more loudly than, “We love you. We’re so happy that you came into our lives.”

Such feelings of rejection are not limited to just those children who are considered “accidents” or “surprises” by their parents. All of us can have such feelings of rejection – of being ignored – of feeling we are unwanted. We can wonder why we are here. What’s my purpose for living?

According to my dictionary, an accident is “an unfortunate incident that happens unexpectedly and unintentionally.” According to our reading from Ephesians, God does not have accidents. God plans out what God will do. What God plans, God makes happen. You are here this morning; You are a believer in Christ; You are a child of God, because God planned for you to be God’s children. You are not accidents. You were planned.

Our text declares that God had chosen you before the foundation of the world. Before God had created anything, God had planned for you in Christ. Thus, you are not “an unfortunate incident that happened unexpectedly and unintentionally.” God planned for you a long, long, long time ago. God wanted each one of you as his children since before the creation of the world.

You can start an interesting conversation should someone ask you, “When did you become a Christian?” You can answer, “Before the creation of the world.” That usually gets startled looks. Being Christians is God’s work for us. It’s not something we’ve done. It was God’s choice. God made it happen. God wanted you long before you were born.

Similar feelings are often present in parents. When they decide that they want to have a family, they want their children, they love their children before they are conceived, before they are born. The children were wanted and loved long before they came into existence. So it is with God and us.

God put together the atoms and molecules that have existed forever that make up you and your body in a unique way. No other part of God’s creation is the same as you. God planned for you just the way you are.

What are God’s plans for us? God wants us to be his adopted children. God wants us “to be holy and blameless in his presence.” God wants us to be redeemed – bought back from our slavery to sin by Christ’s blood. God wants to forgive our trespasses. God wants to lavish us with his grace.

Have you ever thought about God being rich? Six times in this letter God is described as being rich. “Rich” implies having an abundance of something. Paul tells us that God is rich in grace. God is rich in mercy.

God has lots of grace and mercy. What we are promised about God’s riches is that God wants to give them to us! The Greek has, “We have ... the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace which he has made to overflow in us.” God has more than enough grace for us. God wants to give us more grace than we need! In more common terms, we might say, “God wants to spoil us with the riches of his grace.”

Not only does God want you as his children, but God also wants to spoil you from the riches of his grace. Not only does God spoil you, but our text ends by stating that God has given you the Holy Spirit who is the down payment of our inheritance. Five times in this letter, it talks about our inheritance. God has a wonderful inheritance waiting for you. God spoils you now and God has even more in store for you in the future.

Why are you here? Why are you in church this morning? Why are you here on planet earth? Maybe you can’t always come up with good answers to those questions; but as a Christian, you can be sure that your presence on earth and in church is no accident. Among other things, you are here to honor the glory of God – a phrase that is repeated three times in our lesson. We do that with the way we live our lives and how we treat others with the same kind of overflowing love we have received.

One additional comment about this. This letter is addressed to believers. It is not talking about those people who, for whatever reasons, do not believe in God or in Jesus Christ. This letter doesn’t attempt to deal with the issue of unbelief.

This letter doesn’t deal with evil and violence in the world, like we witnessed yesterday in Pennsylvania or the ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza and elsewhere.

This is a letter addressed to you and me as believers. It tells us what it means to be believers. In part, it means that we understand that we are not accidents. We are part of God’s plans from the beginning of creation to the end of time.

There is much in the world to make you feel like an unloved and unwanted person— but not in the family of God. You are not an accident with God. God planned for you. God planned for you from before the creation of the world. God wanted to adopt you. God wants to give you more grace and mercy than you can use right now. God wants you to have a wonderful inheritance in the future.

You may not be able to fully understand or figure out why God would choose you – why God would want you as his child – why God would be so gracious and merciful towards someone like you – but you can know and believe that God planned for you just as you are. You are not an accident. God has wanted you as his children from the beginning of time. For that, we can only give thanks.