

25-0928a Transcript

25-0928a - *The "In Crowd," Part 1, Jim Lokenbauer*

Bible Readers: Mike Mathis and John Nousek

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The "In Crowd," Part 1

Scripture Readings

1st Reading (0:04 - 0:30): Mike Mathis

Exodus 20:20: (0:04) The first scripture reading this morning is taken from Ephesians, the first chapter. (0:13) We'll be reading verses one through seven. (0:18) Fall an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints who are in Ephesus (0:27) and the faithful in Christ Jesus. (0:32) Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (0:42) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every (0:51) spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ just as he chose us in him (1:03) before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and without blame before him (1:14) having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure (1:26) of his will to the praise of the glory of his grace by which he made us accepted in the beloved (1:39) in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the riches (1:50) of his grace. That completes the reading.

2nd Reading (0:35 - 1:01): John Nousek

Proverbs 1:7: Good morning. This morning's second scripture reading (2:04) continues in the book of Ephesians chapter one. I heard the first seven verses. I'll read another (2:14) seven. So verse seven ends with according to the riches of his grace. Verse eight begins, (2:23) which he lavished on us in all wisdom and insight. He made known to us the mystery of his will (2:31) according to his kind intention which he purposed in him (2:37) with a view to the administration to an administration suitable to the fullness of all (2:44) of the times. It is the summing up of all things in Christ things in the heavens (2:53) and things on the earth in him. Also, we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined (3:04) according to his purpose who works all things after the counsel of his will. To the end, (3:14) that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of his glory in him. (3:23) You also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, (3:31) having also believed you were sealed in him with the holy spirit of promise was given as a pledge (3:42) as our inheritance. It's a view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of his glory. (3:53) Amen.

Transcript (0:04 - 37:22)

Preacher: Jim Lokenbauer

(3:58) I want to thank the men for reading those long stretches of scripture. (4:05) It's not easy getting up here and doing that, and they do a really good job.

(4:13) This morning, I'm bringing you a lesson titled, Are You In With The In Crowd? (4:22) And as you know, our readings were from the first chapter of Ephesians, (4:28) verse 14 verses. In 1964, there was an American singer named Dobie Gray, (4:37) and he had a popular song titled, The "In Crowd". In the 70s, it was repopularized by (4:46) Brian Ferry of Roxy Music fame.

I know I'm dating myself here. The song espoused how great it was (4:55) to be in a clique with the

popular people who were on the cutting edge of all the latest (5:02) worldly social trends. That song glorified carnal behavior by boasting about ungodly virtues (5:13) of being led by the flesh.

It's too bad that oftentimes the songs with a fun, catchy tune (5:20) have the worst lyrics. So beware that you don't allow those to play over and over in your head. (5:28) In the 70s, I did.

I liked that song, but I was also outside of Christ, so it didn't bother me at (5:36) all. The apostle John warned us in his first letter to the church. He said, Do not love the (5:45) world or anything in the world.

If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him, (5:52) for everything in the world, the cravings of sinful man, the lust of his eyes, (5:58) the boasting of what he has and does, comes not from the Father, but from the world. (6:05) Being on the outside of that "In Crowd" is a good thing. But what if I told you that we, (6:14) in a playful sense, are the true "In Crowd"? We're not the crowd that chases after the wind, (6:25) so to speak, but we're one of the multitude of people who have heard and accepted the truth (6:33) that comes from the very heart of God.

And as a result, we've had the scales removed from our (6:42) eyes so we can see clearly how futile that way of life actually is. (6:51) This morning's scripture readings from Ephesians, you may have noticed that there was a theme in (7:01) those 14 verses. The word in was used by Paul 20 times.

10 of those times it is uniquely used (7:12) to indicate our relationship with our Savior by being in Christ, in him, in the one he loves. (7:26) So let's once again read through Ephesians 1 through 14 with that in mind and see if you (7:34) can pick out the theme there. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God to the saints in (7:44) Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord (7:54) Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the (8:00) heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For he chose us in him before the creation (8:11) of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons (8:19) through Jesus Christ in accordance with his pleasure and will to the praise of his glory (8:27) which he has freely given us in the one he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, (8:37) the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us (8:43) with all wisdom and understanding and he made known to us the mystery of his will according (8:49) to his good pleasure which he purposed in Christ to be put into effect when the times will have (8:59) reached their fulfillment to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, (9:07) even Christ.

In him we were also chosen having been predestined according to the plan of him (9:17) who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will in order that we who (9:25) were the first to hope in Christ might be for the praise of his glory and you also were included (9:33) in Christ when you heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation having believed you were (9:43) marked in him with a seal the promised holy spirit who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance (9:52) until the redemption of those who are God's possession to the praise of his glory.

Did you (10:00) pick up on that theme that all blessings are in Christ? Paul used in 36 times in his Ephesian (10:12) letter and 176 times in the rest of his writings many of them expressing this unique way of showing (10:23) our relationship with Jesus by being in Christ. Let's go verse by verse and glean what we can (10:33) from our text to get a better understanding of being in Christ in this

"In Crowd" of holy people. (10:45) Verse 1 Paul an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints in Ephesus the faithful (10:54) in Christ Jesus.

In verse 1 Paul introduces himself with his heavenly credentials and (11:04) authority. He is an apostle by our Lord by his will that the father in heaven had chosen him (11:17) before time began to be an apostle. God has foreknowledge of individuals (11:28) before he even created the universe he knew Paul.

Does that not make your head spin (11:38) with the awesomeness of our God and the father chose him and sent him even though (11:49) even through the letter even though it's addressed to the church at Ephesus Paul had stated elsewhere (11:56) in his writings that they should be read and all the other congregations as well so it means the (12:03) information in the Ephesian letter as in all his letters are for the whole church throughout the (12:11) world at all times.

What God spoke to the church then pertains to us today it's useful information (12:21) for Christians today and this verse conveys these ideas one the saints are the faithful (12:32) and as a side note on saints contrary to catholic doctrine that the saints are just a chosen special (12:41) few all the true believers in God are saints we are saints Saint Jean, Saint Scott, Saint Michael, (12:53) Saint Ruth, Saint John, Saint Joe way back there we're all saints and two the second point of this (13:12) verse is that the saints are the ones in Christ Jesus and saint was a term used not just in the (13:27) new testament but even in second chronicles Solomon used the word saints to describe (13:38) the congregation of Israel as he was dedicating the temple and saint is from the Hebrew word (13:51) which means pious, holy, godly, good, saint.

Verse two, grace and peace to you from God our father (14:06) the lord Jesus Christ Paul was one of the chosen spokesmen for God and here he conveys a special (14:15) blessing to the saints from God and Jesus grace and peace having received God's grace and peace (14:25) puts us in fellowship with God and Jesus and these are two very meaningful and powerful words.

(14:34) To us saints grace is God's mercy love and forgiveness of sins offered to all mankind (14:45) by having faith in Jesus. Here in this context though in Paul's greeting to the church, it's (14:53) the highest blessing that he could give to have God's continued pouring out of his grace upon (15:01) believers. And those who have obedient believed in Jesus as the son of God and have accepted (15:08) his atoning sacrifice by dying with them in baptism.

Therefore, thereby receiving forgiveness (15:17) of sins through it as a result thereby removing any hostility between God and sinful man (15:28) it creates peace between God and man. And God continues to sprinkle us with the blood of Christ (15:36) so long as we're walking in fellowship with him knowing we're forgiven of sins. This gives us the state (15:43) of mind of peace, the mind that is tranquil and at rest in God's presence our conscience not (15:54) convicting us of any sin, it's been removed. We can be at peace with our creator.

(16:03) Verse three, Praise be to the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ (16:08) who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. (16:17) Where are those blessings? In Christ. Peter tells us God has given us everything we need for life (16:26) and godliness through our knowledge of him, God, the father. God from heaven has poured out on us (16:38) through the Holy Spirit his love and all of these spiritual blessings because we are in Christ. (16:46) Our old sinful nature the carnal self that was nailed to his cross and we're no longer walking (16:55) according to the flesh but have become new creatures in Christ and are now walking according

(17:03) to the spirit. God expects his children to be fruitful in many ways.

So God gave us his Holy (17:13) Spirit to aid us in our serving him. He equips the saints with the fruits of the spirit as he (17:22) transforms our character to start to image that of Jesus, his character. He blesses us with love, (17:34) joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control, just to name a few.

(17:44) And God equips the saints also to engage in spiritual warfare by giving us the full armor (17:54) of God. These are all spiritual blessings. Blessings of good Christian character, you know, blessings of (18:03) the armor of God to engage the enemy as we go about serving God and being fruitful for him.

(18:13) Our battle, by the way, is not with mankind, we're trying to save them. (18:20) Satan uses the ungodly people to battle against us though, but we must understand the big picture, (18:29) that there is a spiritual battle going on all around us in the heavenly realm. (18:38) Good versus evil. And the only way we can survive that is to use the spiritual armor that God gives (18:48) us.

And what is that armor? It is truth, it is righteousness faith, the readiness to share the (18:58) gospel, we have confidence in our salvation, that's part of our armor. We know that they may kill the (19:09) body but God protects our souls in Christ and our weapons are the sword of the spirit which is (19:20) the word of God. And finally prayer these are the things that God blesses us with from the heavenly (19:31) realms. He pours out these spiritual blessings on us.

(19:38) Verse four, "He chose us in him before the creation," (19:43) Some versions say, "before the foundation of the world," "to be holy and blameless in his sight." (19:53) With this verse we've entered into an area of doctrine that has led to much confusion and (20:01) error. There was a man by the name of John Calvin who lived over 500 years ago and he was the author (20:11) of a doctrine called Calvinism. It's the main purveyor of this particular false teaching (20:21) regarding election and predestination. In a nutshell, he introduced humanism, believe it or not, (20:32) into the approach of understanding scriptures rather than letting God speak through the (20:39) scripture. By approaching the bible with just human reasoning you end up with varying ideas (20:47) on the same subject. Everything is open for interpretation on the individual's understanding. (20:56) By acknowledging the authority and perfectness of God's revealed word and letting scripture (21:03) speak for itself, many of the traps he's created could have been avoided. (21:10) Much of protestantism is based on his false teachings.

He also introduced the false teaching (21:21) of faith only, yes, John Calvin. And in regard to election and predestination as seen in verses (21:31) four of Ephesians and verse 11, he wrote that God has determined from eternity whom he will save (21:42) and whom he will damn, regardless of their faith, love, or merit or lack thereof. (21:51) Citing that the depravity of man can't be controlled, he further writes that God chooses (21:58) some of the human race, which exists in opposition to all that is divine, and includes the elect (22:07) in his kingdom. This idea underlines the aristocratic character of the kingdom of God (22:15) it consists of an elite elect. What a crock. So much protestant doctrine has been tainted (22:26) by his false teachings and are to be rejected when you let God speak through his word.

(22:34) This subject is fairly easy to understand. He was letting British aristocracy, that idea (22:44) of some people's blood is better than others, creating a caste system into doctrine. That's (22:52) not how God works.

Before creation when just the Godhead existed, it consisted of God the Father, (23:05) God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. They brought to reality a new creation in which there is a (23:14) spiritual realm and a physical realm. Through them God had a way to exhibit his love and creativity (23:24) and his holiness. All was created for his good pleasure, scripture tells us, having foreknowledge (23:36) of how this drama of life is going to unfold in these two realms. As they play out God had a plan (23:47) in place before creation. Verse 4 says in which he would teach all his children that he is God (24:02) and is to be worshiped and adored and that all blessings come from him.

God would show just how (24:10) powerful a force love is through this whole scheme of redemption and what can be achieved (24:19) with love. God gave all his children a created intelligent beings inhabiting both spiritual and (24:28) physical realms of free will in which we choose to obey our heavenly father or disobey him by (24:37) following our own desires. God gave all his children in both realms laws to follow and those laws had (24:47) consequences if those laws were broken.

In the spiritual realm there are angels and their kind (24:55) which God made and they are considered by God his children. They are present with God in heaven. (25:05) So God is reality to them. They do not operate by faith as we do. They have sight. (25:15) They are without excuse if they disobey God and are punished immediately for it.

(25:23) And in the physical realm he created the earth the universe and everything in it with man being (25:30) the pinnacle of his creation because we were actually made in his image. And mankind was also (25:41) considered his children with laws to follow and consequences of those laws were broken. (25:50) God knew that we would sin even before creation. And so before creation he had the plan of salvation (26:01) in place and part of that plan of salvation was the idea of election and predestination. (26:12) God knows ahead of time who will obey the gospel call and who will reject it. (26:20) God has a book of life when you obey the gospel call your name is in that book of life. (26:29) And we're given warning that God can blot your name out of the book of life so we have to remain (26:38) faithful.

(26:45) He has the power of being all-knowing so he knows by name who will receive his word (26:55) and those who will reject it. But by giving us the power to choose a free will, every human throughout (27:10) time, we're walking a fine line, are we going to believe are we going to reject. God knows ahead (27:22) time. He's not arbitrarily just saying, "All these people are going to make it regardless (27:29) of what their character is like," as John Calvin says. No God makes it so that election, (27:40) the choosing so to speak, are those who choose the gospel to obey. That's where the election is, that (27:48) those who obey will be saved. (27:51)

(27:55) John reveals God's gentle drawing or calling. (28:04) In John 6 44 and 65 (28:09) Jesus said no one can come to me unless the father who sent me draws him and I will raise (28:19) him up at the last day he said for this cause I have said to you that no one can come to me (28:26) unless it is given to him by my father. (28:30) So the soul who was listening and looking and paying attention (28:38) to the word of God and truthfully seeking will find.

(28:47) Jesus says I stand at the door and knock (28:51) he who opens his heart to me I will come in and make my home with him. (29:00) So God being a spirit (29:05) and us having the spirit of light in us can touch our hearts and if we're sensitive to that quiet (29:19) whisper that tells us in our mind when we're hearing the word of God this is truth this is (29:27) something I should pay attention to that word touched our hearts and faith is created. (29:35) God had his spirit and is invisible to us, so God doesn't speak to us like we speak to each other.

(29:49) God speak to us through his word our Bible which is God's revealed will for man to follow. (29:58) And since we do not see God in the physical realm we operate by faith we have to believe (30:12) in him. The Bible writer, the Hebrew writer tells us, "Now faith is being sure of what we hope for (30:20) and certain of what we do not see and without faith it is impossible to please God because (30:30) anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly (30:37) seek him."

(30:40) Man was created as a three-part being. One, we have a physical body that has a growth cycle (30:52) and a shelf life being around 70 years. Two, our soul which is the eternal part of us that goes on (31:04) after death. That's the part of us that thinks and feels and is our conscious self. And three, (31:15) God's spirit lives in us the spirit animates our flesh. We're told by James when the body doesn't (31:28) have the spirit anymore we die and that spirit goes back to God. So even unbelievers have God's (31:40) spirit, the breath of life, in their nostrils, it animates their flesh.

When we're baptized we're (31:49) given Holy Spirit who's already in us, believe it or not. But, now as it says, we are marked with a (32:00) seal, the Holy Spirit, saying, "this person belongs to God." And that's why God can touch our hearts, (32:17) by his drawing power, if we're sensitive to it. If we're so into sin and our hearts are (32:28) calloused, they can't hear that gentle whisper God calls us with, that drawing power, "come unto me (32:40) all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," "believe my words be saved," (32:51) "I want you to be with me for all eternity."

(32:58) When we're so into self and sin, it's hard to hear (33:05) God's drawing power that Jesus talks about in the gospel of John chapter 6. (33:16) Salvation is offered to (33:19) all mankind. John Calvin through his doctrine blows that up. (33:27) (33:30) It doesn't matter what you do (33:34) according to John Calvin. Through Calvinism you can live that immoral life and still be selected by (33:44) God, if you are the elect. He's got it so backwards, so messed up. We have to sift through all the (33:58) false doctrines that pop up in Christianity and reject them and just look at the simple truth.

(34:06) John 3 16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whoever believes in him (34:20) shall not perish but have eternal life." That offer is for the whole world (34:29) everybody. John 3 16 blows up what John Calvin says. Also Paul in Titus 2 11 says, "The grace of (34:39) God that brings salvation has appeared to all men." It's there. God is offering salvation to everybody. (34:49) His grace, grace includes that beautiful passion that Jesus did on the cross, He died in our place (35:01) to take our sins away, so that we can be with him again in heaven one day.

And so the election (35:10) process is described in Peter's first letter. First Peter 1 1 and 2 it says, "Peter an apostle (35:20) of Jesus Christ to God's elect strangers in the world who have been chosen," that's the election (35:28) process, "according to the foreknowledge of God the father through the sanctifying work of the spirit (35:38) for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood. Grace and peace," once again (35:47) grace and peace, "be yours in abundance."

If a soul answers that drawing power of God (35:55) through hearing the word and are obedient to Jesus his commands to repent, to believe, to be baptized, (36:08) being faithful to his words, and following what he says. When you're baptized that's where you're (36:17) sprinkled by his blood, cleansing you from sin. And you receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (36:28) foretold, and that is who sanctifies us sets us apart for holy purpose so that we can now (36:39) serve God with clean conscience. That is how we become part of God's "In Crowd," to be in Christ. (36:51)

We're going to talk more about that this evening. So we're going to stop here. And (36:59) we'll go into depth this evening and finish the lesson. So if you need we offer the invitation, (37:06) if you want to be part of the Lord's "In Crowd," and reject the worldly in Christ, you can come (37:14) and have your sins washed away. If you need the prayers of the church, we'll be glad to pray for you. (37:20) So come as we stand and sing.