Favorite Chapters - Ephesians 1

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[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. We are still in our favorite chapters series, and I don't expect you to remember this, but last time my favorite chapter that I preached through was Ephesians 2.

Today, my next favorite chapter is Ephesians 1. All right, I didn't get very creative there. I tried to ask Michael, do you want me to pursue some other options? There are other chapters that I love in the Bible.
However, Ephesians is my favorite book, and Ephesians 1 is an absolutely incredible chapter. And so, he gave me permission, and this is where we're going to spend our time.
Admittedly, we're going to be talking about some complex theological themes. And so, if I say something that you find confusing, please give me the benefit of the doubt before you write me an email calling me a heretic for how I address the Trinity.
Give me a chance to speak to it, but I'm going to do the very best I can to speak with accuracy about some of these issues in a way that I hope will be helpful for you.
[1:21] Because, as I said, there's so much here in this chapter that if we rightly understand it, we'll strengthen our faith in very unique ways. Michael Reeves is a president of a seminary in the UK.

He is a friend of Michael's. He was able to Zoom with our staff just a few weeks ago, unfortunately. Out of all staff meetings that I had to miss, that was the one. But he has already been an incredible influence in my life, specifically through one of his books that he wrote called The Lighting in the Trinity.
If you want a book to read about the Trinity that will deepen your understanding of it, I would highly recommend it to you.
But the basic premise of his book is that before anything existed, God was a loving father delighting in his son through the spirit.
All right? They were already, the God, one God in three persons were already engaged in a mutually loving relationship before anything else was created.
[2:38] He thinks that that is important because it means that when he acts as creator, he is able to do so in an abundance and an overflow of his love that he has already been expressing for an eternity past.

He has already passed within himself. He was already fully active. So when he created, it was not out of loneliness. It was not out of need.
If he was truly just one person, one God, he would not have had any opportunity to already exercise love.
Because whom would he love? And what would he love? But because he was already in this loving relationship among the three persons of the Trinity, when he created, he was therefore able to create out of love.
For if he was to need anything outside of himself, that would mean that he as God would be incomplete. He must be eternally satisfied in himself for him to be fully God.
[3:44] Jesus, when he was praying to the Father in John 17, verse 24, he says, You loved me before the foundation of the world.

There was already love being expressed before the foundation of the world. And he goes on to say in verse 26, I made known to them, he's talking about the disciples and his followers and eventually all of us as his people.
I made known to them your name and I will continue to make it known that the love with which you have loved me may be in them and I in them.

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So in one sense, salvation is the forgiveness of sins, but it is more than that. It is a call to delight in the triune God who is eternally happy.
He is eternally life-giving. He is eternally loving. And so I want to submit to us tonight that our understanding of salvation is best and most profoundly understood when we view it as the completed work of the Trinity, motivated by his love and overflow of his love, secured by his nature and his character to the praise of his glory.
[5:04] I think if we can grasp Paul's intent in Ephesians 1, it will ignite our affections for the Lord. It will strengthen our confidence in the security of our souls.

It will deepen our praise that we express to him. I find it interesting in light of our passage tonight that Jesus mentions in John 17, the love that the Father had for him before the foundation of the world.
This eternally existing loving relationship between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit was in full operation before anything was created. The Trinity operates in that way even as we speak.
And that will never cease to exist that way. This love existed before the foundation of the world. And this is precisely the point in time where Paul takes his original audience in the book of Ephesians to before the foundation of the world.
So for the sake of time, I'm not going to read the whole passage first, but we're just going to jump in and work our way through it. Some of the beginning stages are going to require a little bit more. So I promise I'll do my best to then catch us up in time after that, but don't look at the clock and get concerned.
[6:19] However, I'll do my best to get us out on time. And we still have the Lord's Supper, which we are looking forward to celebrating here in just a few minutes. But it is worth noting in the original Greek verses 3 through 14 were one long sentence.

Most would agree that it's the longest sentence in the original languages in the Bible. If you want to try to do it in one breath, it's kind of fun. I got through verse 11. So if you want to beat me, start at 3, read as fast as you can.
You'll sound like you're reading the side effects of a medication at the end of a commercial. And you might get all the way through it. If you beat me, text me and let me know. But I believe that Paul wants us to view our salvation as the completed, secured work of the Trinity.
And so because of that, we're going to walk through each person of the Trinity's role in salvation. But while I intend to address each person of the Trinity individually, it will become very clear that none of their works occur independently of the others.
I'm going to skip past the greeting and salutation. I'm going to read verse 3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.
[7:34] And so we're beginning here first. Our first major point is the Father's plan. The Father's plan. Paul begins with a doxological statement, a word of praise.

It says, we bless God because of how he has blessed us. That is a different use of the word bless. He is saying that we bless him with our words and with our praise because of how he has blessed us with his actions and with himself as a gift to us.
It says that he has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Pneumaticos, which means of the Spirit, capital S. This speaks to the source of our blessing.
In other words, every blessing that the Spirit gives to God's people is already yours in Christ. And it's the Father who is the one giving us these blessings in and through his Spirit.
And so within these blessings, I want us to first see our election. Our election. Revelation 13.8 says, tells us that those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life, the life of the Lamb who was slain, were written, written, here's our phrase again, before the foundation of the world.
[9:08] Being chosen before the foundation of the world means he chose us in him before anything that we have done, any attribute we possess, before anything that would warrant and merit his love.

This is very reminiscent of Paul's description of God's sovereign choice of Jacob over Esau in Romans 9. It also means that before we have even yet sinned, he had already chosen us in him. This election is secured from eternity past. And mind you, before the foundation of the world is also when John in his gospel said that God was eternally loving the Son and the Spirit.

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And we're reminded that it was an outpouring of his love. It was through that that he created. And it's in the same moment and in the same time in redemptive history that Paul is saying that we were chosen in him.
This is an extension of his love. We were chosen in Christ. John 17.23 says, I in them and you in me, this is Jesus speaking to his Father, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.
[10:25] So as he has loved Christ, he has loved us in Christ. The love of the Father has always, that he has always had for Christ, is the love with which he now loves us in Christ.

Before we get too far into this, just let me say from the beginning, the Bible is crystal clear that we have a will to exercise. We are commanded to respond to the Lord.
We are responsible for our own actions. We're going to get to that actually in verse 13. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, you believed in him. Yet the Bible teaches that no one can come to me, this is Jesus speaking, unless the Father who sent me draws him.
That's John 6.44. There's this drawing that must take place. If we're not drawn, we don't come to him. John 6.37, John 7.37, all that the Father gives to me shall come to me, and the one who comes to me, I will certainly not cast out.
So by implication, if all that the Father gives to Christ will come to him, then it is clear that if someone does not come to him, the Father has not given them to Christ.
[11:34] John 17.2, So how does this work?

Does God elect men unto salvation, or are they called to respond to him in faith? The answer is yes. How does this work together?
If you're taking notes, write, I don't know. I don't know how this all works together.
I don't know how we're elected in Christ before the foundation of the world, and yet fully responsible for choosing to put in place our faith and trust in him in Christ. But just because they're two seemingly opposite and irreconcilable truths does not mean that we ignore the tension and try to rationalize them both away.
Is Jesus fully God, or fully man? Yes. How does that work? I don't know. Is Yahweh one God, or is he three persons? The answer is yes.
[12:37] He is one God in three persons. How does that work? I don't know. Does God save the one who perseveres to the end, or does he promise to finish and complete the good work that he began in you?

The answer is yes. How does that work? I'm not sure. John MacArthur says we can believe both. Seemingly opposite and irreconcilable truths and completely leave their harmonization to God.
But scripture is clear. He chose us before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless. Yes, we are called to pursue a personal holiness. That's true.
But this is a positional holiness that is guaranteed in Christ. It says holy and blameless in love. In your Bibles, in love might start the next sentence.
I want to remind you that Paul's sentence, it was one long sentence, three through 14. And so there's been some controversy or just some, it's been unclear. Which did he mean?
[13:35] Were we chosen to be holy and blameless in love? Or was it in love that he predestined us? Either would be true. Most would agree that they believe that it's attached to this sentence here.

The LSB actually reads that way. It says that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. So if love relates to holiness and blamelessness, then holiness is not called moralism, but it is love-filled Christlikeness.
Again, speaking of the love that has already existed within the Trinity, if it relates to his predestining, then it expresses his attitude to his people. Either way, we can be confident that his motivations for our election were internal and they were an expression of his eternally loving relationship within the Trinity.
Second thing that I want you to notice within still number point, number one of the Father's plan is not only our election, but our predestined adoption. Verse five, he predestined us for adoption as sons to himself through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will.
This word predestined means God decreeing from eternity to decide beforehand. It appears six times in the New Testament and is used exclusively of God and serves to emphasize his sole initiative and authority in our salvation.

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[15:06] Predestination is for a God-designed purpose and in this instance, it is adoption, which in Greco-Roman law signified entry into a very privileged position.

So this is a Trinitarian action. We see it here. The Father chose us. He chose us in Christ. He adopted us through Christ. So we have the Father and the Son.
And then listen to what Paul says elsewhere in Romans 8, verse 15 to 17, that you have received the spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, Abba, Father. The spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.
So he chose us in Christ. He predestined us for adoption through Christ as we have received the spirit of adoption, which bears witness that we are children of God.
But it begs the question, on account of what actions or according to what criteria? Is it because I did something? Is it because I was born to these parents?
[16:12] Is it because I am this ethnicity or is it because I'm of this nationality? And the answer is no. Verse five, it is according to the purpose of his will. It doesn't care to give any other explanations than that.

It is for the purpose and according to the purpose of his will. Why? Why? Verse six, to the praise of his glorious grace. All of this leads to the praise of his glorious grace with which he has blessed us in the beloved.
So when someone asks you why you believe you're going to heaven, if you answer, because I, fill in the blank, you've missed it.
But John, I have to believe, right? I had to repent, right? I had to choose him, right? And the answer is absolutely.
Scripture affirms all of those things to be true, but they are true in the way that one hymn writer put it. I sought the Lord and afterward I knew.
[17:19] He moved my soul to seek him, seeking me. It was not I that found, oh, Savior, true. No, I was found by thee.

Getting this right makes God the author and the initiator of our salvation long before we ever breathed our first breath. So salvation begins not with a cold decree, but it's with God's eternal love spilling over to us.
It's an overflow of who he's always been in relation to the Son and the Spirit. He didn't choose us to meet a need within himself, but rather because the Father loves to share the joy that he has always had with the Son in eternity past.
This means that your salvation is rooted not in your performance, but in the Father's delight. We've seen the Father's blessing in election in our predestined adoption as his children, but now we turn to the Son's redemptive work.
The Son's work. Ephesians 1, 7 says, In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of his grace.
[18:39] So the first thing I want you to notice as being of the Son's work is the Son's work of redemption and forgiveness. The Son's work of redemption and forgiveness.

Redemption is a word used to refer to paying a ransom for a release from prison for a slave. During the New Testament times, the Roman Empire had as many as six million slaves.
And if a person wanted to free a loved one or a friend who was a slave, he would buy that slave for himself and then grant him freedom. This is the word picture for us here.
Every human being born since the fall has come into the world enslaved to sin. And until we see our need for redemption from that slavery to sin, we'll not see our need for a redeemer.
It is then that we can sing, I was lost in utter darkness until you came and rescued me. I was bound by all my sin when your love came and set me free.
[19:49] Verse 7 says that we were redeemed through his blood. Verse Peter 1, 18 to 20 says, knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

He was foreknown, here's our phrase, before the foundation of the world, but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you. So our forgiveness was planned before the foundation of the world.

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It was purchased on the cross and it was applied to us when we believed. We have redemption. We have the forgiveness of sins through Christ, through his blood.
not only do we see the son's work of redemption and the son's work of forgiveness, but we see the son's gift of grace.
Second half of 7 says, according to the riches of his grace which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight. 2 Timothy 1, 9 says that he saved us and called us to a holy calling not because of our works, but because of his own purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus.
[21:14] Guess when? Before the ages began. We see it here again. Because he saved us, not because of our works, but because of his purpose and grace which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began.

It says, according to the riches of his grace. According to means in keeping with. In keeping with. A few years ago, Dana White, president of the UFC, made headlines when he gifted a friend $250,000 as a birthday present.
It's a sizable donation. His net worth at the time was around $500 million. So for someone to give $250,000 when their net worth is $500 million is the equivalent of someone with a net worth of $100,000 giving a $50 birthday gift.
How many of you would appreciate a $50 gift from me? That would be pretty sizable, right? $50 gift, pretty good. Most of you would appreciate it. for Elon Musk who has an estimated net worth of $460 billion.
Dana White's $250,000 gift would be the equivalent of someone like you or me giving five cents. I imagine most of you would not appreciate a five cent gift from me.
[22:49] I don't even know that I could purchase something with five cents anymore. But as dispensable as a nickel is to us is $250,000 to Elon Musk.

So for Elon Musk to give the equivalent of our $50, he would need to give $230 million to match the proportional sacrifice of someone like you or me giving $50.
$230 million. That would be according to the riches of Elon Musk. That would be appropriate according to his riches. And this is a small picture of what we're talking about when God gives according to the riches of his grace.
The king of the universe who owns it all and it says not only does he give it to us, he gives it to us lavishly. The riches of his grace which he lavished upon us, verse 8, in all wisdom and insight.
Romans 5.20 says where sin increased, grace abounded all the more. He gives grace according to his riches and so if you are ever curious, if you have sinned too much to be covered by the blood of Christ, you have failed to understand the depths and the riches of his grace and his mercy.
[24:12] Don't ever let Satan tempt you to despair when he tells you of the guilt within. Look to Christ and see him there who made an end of all your sin.

Thirdly, I want you to see within the son's redemptive work is the son's revelation of his will. Well, Ephesians 5.
I just popped a mint so give it time to work. It says, making known to us the mystery of his will according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him.
Just real quickly, the mystery is God's eternal plan of redemption. Once concealed in ages past but now made fully known in Christ. That's why we sing Come Behold the wondrous mystery has now been revealed in Jesus Christ.
Fourthly, under the son's redemptive work I want you to see the son's inheritance. Verse 11. The ESV reads, In him we have obtained an inheritance.
[25:27] having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will. The Greek would indicate that we are apportioned as an inheritance.

We are those who are made to be the inheritance rather than those who have obtained an inheritance. Most commentators would translate it this way, in him we also have been made an inheritance.
which is how the LSB also reads, having been predestined according to the purpose of him. In other words, Paul is once again making it clear that God's love is based on something in his heart rather than on anything that we would achieve or claim for ourselves.
And we are given to Christ as an inheritance. We are Christ's inheritance. This is eternally granted by the Father and secured by the Spirit. Christ's inheritance will not be lost.

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We will not be lost. That's why we sing, he'll not let my soul be lost. His promises shall last. I've been bought by him at such a cost. He must hold me fast.
[26:37] Why did he do this? Ephesians 1.12, so that we who are the first to hope in Christ might be, here's our phrase that Paul keeps going back at the end of each section, to the praise of his glory.

All of this working of salvation through each member of the Trinity is to the praise of his glory. The Son brings us into this loving relationship with the Father.
It's more than forgiveness, it is adoption. So we see the Father's blessing, we see the Son's redemptive work, and now want us to see the Spirit's guarantee.
The Father's blessing, the Son's redemptive work, the Spirit's guarantee. Verse 13, in him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance, until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.
In Christ, when we heard the word of truth, when we heard the gospel, and when we believed, we were sealed. John 1, 12 says it this way, but to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
[28:05] It was in this moment that we were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit. Ephesians 4, 30 says, do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.

A seal in those days meant security, it meant authenticity, it meant ownership, it meant authority. It carried with it all of the weight of the one who was doing the sealing.
Not only were we sealed, but it says who is the guarantee, the Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance. This word is used to describe earnest money, money that is given as a pledge or a down payment that the full amount will be subsequently paid.
So it's the Spirit who seals, he is the one who guarantees the Son will keep his inheritance. To say we will not be lost is an understatement.
Romans 5, 5 says, God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.
[29:18] Once again, God operating out of an extension and overflow of his love, the same love that the Son was saying that is able to be shared with us through Christ, it is now saying Romans 5 has been poured into our hearts through the Spirit, all working together in this act of love in our redemption.

Why did the Spirit seal and guarantee our inheritance? To the praise of his glory. Once again, we see that over and over to the praise of his glory.
The Father chose us and predestined us for adoption as sons and daughters to the praise of his glory. The Son redeemed forgave, revealed his will, and claims us as his inheritance to the praise of his glory.
In other words, the Father planned it, the Son purchased it, and the Spirit secured it.
The Spirit serves as the bond of love between the Father and Son that has always existed and has been poured into our hearts. God's own life dwelling in us, assuring us that we belong to God's family.
[30:32] It enables us to taste the communion of the Father and Son, as one commentator put it. And so we close here in verse 15 and following with Paul's prayer for the saints.

Paul's prayer for the saints. This is for this reason, verse 15, because I've heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and your love toward all the saints.
I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him, having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe according to the working of his great might, that he worked in Christ when he raised him from right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.
He put all things under his feet and he gave him his head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all. So Paul's prayer for the saints, we notice really quickly, is Trinitarian.

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It says that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father, of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him. Paul wants you desperately to see that the God who saved you is the God of the Trinity, the God of the Bible, eternally existing in one person or one God, three persons, Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit, and his prayer for you is not, or excuse me, is now, that because the eyes of your hearts have been enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, that is his prayer, that you would know what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe.
[32:48] Paul's prayer at the end of this chapter reminds us that the greatest need of the Christian life is not to receive more blessings, blessings, but to have our eyes open to the blessings that we already possess.

God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. We already possess these. To know the hope that is already yours, to know the worth that God places on us as his people, to know the power that is at work within us, the very power that raised Jesus from the dead and seated him at the Father's right hand.
God has loved. Michael Reeves reminds us that Christianity begins with a God who is love, a Father eternally loving his Son in the joy of the Spirit.
Ephesians 1 shows us that this same triune God has brought us into that love. The Father chose us not out of need but out of overflowing delight.
The Son redeemed us to share with us his own sonship and inheritance and the Spirit seals us making God's own life dwell within us.
[34:04] Paul's opening to the Ephesians is not a lifeless theological proposition but a hymn to enjoy. Salvation is the Father, Son, and Spirit working together to make us sons and daughters who belong at the family table.

people. This is why Paul ends to the praise of his glory because as both Michael Reeves and Paul would encourage us is that the Trinity is not a doctrine to endure but a God to delight in and in Christ that delight is yours.
God's so in light of thanksgiving, passion saying we have something to be grateful for because of Paul's reminder I was trying to think through what can I give as our parting words of application.
I think it would be most fitting to just list ten things for you that from this passage Paul wants us to be thankful for. I'll read them. If you want to just take one word I'll give you the one word that you can write down in its place but let this be how we close this portion of our time before we take the Lord's Supper.
We want to praise God for every spiritual blessing that he has given you in Christ. You can just write spiritual blessing. These blessings are already yours.
[35:33] Number two we praise God for choosing you or adopting you and loving you in Christ. You can put adoption or election whichever word or love.

You don't have to earn this salvation. He's chosen you and adopted you. We can be grateful for that. Praise God that you were redeemed. You can put redemption from your life of slavery to sin. We were ransomed from the futile ways that we inherited. Right? Forgiveness. Praise God that you are forgiven of all of your trespasses.
He's faithful and just to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Fifth, you can praise him for his grace that he lavished upon us.
His limitless grace that exceeds our sin and our guilt. Every sin you have ever committed or well ever committed has been atoned for. You can write, inheritance.
[36:37] Praise God that you are Christ's inheritance, an inheritance that was predestined according to the purposes of God and the counsel of his will secured by the Spirit. That inheritance will never be lost and consequently we will never be lost.

We can thank him that we are his inheritance. seventh, you can write gospel. Praise God that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation and believed in him.
How beautiful are the feet that bring good news, those who are faithful to proclaim the gospel to you. We give God praise for all of those things. Number eight, we praise God that when you believed in him you were sealed with the Holy Spirit.
You can write sealed or sealing. He claimed and marked us as his own, that we are Christ and he will not lose one that has been given to him. You can write guarantee.

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Praise God that the Holy Spirit is serving as a guarantee of our internal inheritance in Christ until we acquire possession of it. He is the one securing our salvation. We do not have to strive to keep it. [37:46] We cannot lose it. And then lastly, praise God for having the eyes of our hearts enlightened to see these glorious truths.

If you want to put enlightened or enlightenment in all of the right ways, in all of the biblical ways, we have been enlightened with glorious truths and we live them out under the rule and authority of Christ.

All of these things reminding us that we were chosen in him for the foundation of the world, that we were secured through the work of Christ on the cross and when we placed our faith and trust in him, the Holy Spirit sealed us for an eternity all to the praise of his glory.

Father, we do not have words that adequately express our gratefulness to you. As we sing, we see the price of our redemption.

We see the Father's plan unfold, bringing many sons to glory, grace unmeasured, love untold. [38:56] We thank you that you are eternally satisfied in yourself. You did not need us, but when you created us, it was so that we could experience your love. We thank you for inviting us to delight in you, the most glorious being.

Lord, when we delight in you, it is to our greatest good and you receive glory through it. And so, Lord, I pray that Ephesians 1 will deepen our faith in you and will make our praise all the more sweet as we thank you, the triune God of our salvation, for all that you have done to redeem us as your own.

We pray things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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