Title: Before the Foundation of the World: God's Sovereign Grace and Our Response of Humility

Sermon Summary: Drawing from Ephesians 1:3-6, this sermon explores the sovereign, eternal work of God the Father in planning the salvation of sinners before the creation of the world. The speaker emphasizes that salvation is entirely the gracious work of the triune God — planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, and preserved by the Holy Spirit — leaving no room for human pride or boasting. Because God chose, predestined, and adopted believers into his family according to the kind intention of his will and not on the basis of any human merit, the only fitting response is a life of enlivened humility, enduring holiness, and praise to the glory of his grace. The sermon stresses that election does not excuse sin but rather produces holiness, and that God's sovereign purpose has always been to call a people who would glorify and praise him in every area of life.

Key Points:

- God the Father planned salvation in eternity past, before the foundation of the world, according to his own gracious purpose and not based on any merit in man

- Every spiritual blessing believers possess is found in Christ and originates in the heavenly places, making these blessings eternal rather than temporary or earthly

- God not only rescued believers from the dominion of darkness but transferred them into the kingdom of his beloved Son, uniting them with Christ in his death and resurrection

- Predestination in scripture always refers to believers and is never presented as God arbitrarily consigning people to condemnation, while the offer of salvation remains open to all who come in faith

- Believers have been adopted as sons and daughters into the family of God, a privilege that belongs entirely to God's sovereign mercy and grace

- The purpose of election, adoption, and redemption is the praise of God's glorious grace, and this doxological aim is repeated throughout Ephesians 1:3-14

- The appropriate response to understanding God's sovereign grace is enlivened humility, not pride, and a life of praise directed toward God in every setting, not only in corporate worship

Scripture Reference:

- Ephesians 1:3-6 (the primary passage, describing God's spiritual blessings, election before the foundation of the world, predestination, and adoption through Christ to the praise of his glorious grace)

- Supporting references include 2 Peter 1:2-4, Colossians 1:13-14, Romans 8:29-30, Ephesians 2:4-10, 2 Timothy 1:8-9, 1 Peter 1:14-16, Colossians 3:3, 1 John 3:1, Philippians 2:12-13, Psalm 63, and Psalm 150

Stories:

- The speaker recalls visiting his mother's classroom as a child and being captivated by the number line that stretched around the entire perimeter of the room, extending in both directions toward infinity, which he uses to illustrate the concept of God's eternal existence having no beginning or end

- The speaker shares a personal testimony of once believing he did not need to be rescued by God, thinking he stood on firm ground, only to recognize later that he was sinking in a dark abyss without Christ

- The speaker describes attending Cincinnati Reds games as a child and sitting in the upper seats while other children pressed against the fence seeking autographs from players, using this memory to illustrate the concept of praise as acknowledging and declaring the worth of something, even at great cost

- The conversion of Saul of Tarsus on the road to Damascus is referenced as a demonstration of God's sovereign, unprepared, and unexpected intervention in the life of the least likely person, transforming the chief persecutor of Christians into the author of much of the New Testament