

Title: The Blessings Bestowed Upon God's Church

Passage: Ephesians 1:1-14

Introduction:

Ephesus

- Young church previously founded by Paul during a missionary journey.
- Now surrounded by all kinds of evil.
- Letter of Ephesians written to encourage and edify the believers

- Paul wrote this while in prison

- Acts 18-20 (Paul sent almost 3 years in Ephesus, helping establish and build up the church)
 - 1/2 Timothy - Paul wrote these to encourage Timothy who was leading the church in Ephesus
- Temptations arose
 - False teachers/prophets

Ephesians

- Focus: the church, pointing out what it should be.
 - What God designed us to be, what should we be, and how we should respond

- Ch 1-3 - theological; Ch 4-6 - practical

Overview of Passage

Verses 1-2 (salutation to church)

Verses 3-14 (one sentence in Greek)

Theme of Passage

Ephesians 1:3 (theme for passage)

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,

- God's spiritual blessings bestowed

Question: What does it mean "spiritual"?

- Spiritual blessings are related to heaven and freely given to us
 - Contrast: not material blessings (though God does provide material blessings: see Philippians 4:19)

"who has blessed us in Christ"

- Those who have already put their trust in Christ have already experienced spiritual blessings
 - Peace, joy, hope, being part of a spiritual community
 - In Christ, we have all spiritual blessings
- Note: "Already but not yet"
 - We currently experience these blessings to some level but won't fully experience until Christ comes again
 - We feel some level of joy but won't feel complete joy until Christ returns

Titus 2:13

waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ,

- Today: we will have trouble, fear, and weakness while here on earth.
- But in Christ, we have hope, peace, and security
 - We know there is light at the end of the tunnel of this world
 - Hope = a sure thing (not wishful thinking)
- Quote: The reality of our status in Christ makes our challenges less intimidating though not less real.

Overview of Passage: Blessings Bestowed by God

I. Adoption

II. Redemption in Christ

III. Forgiveness of Sins

IV. Revelation of God's purpose in history

V. Inheritance

VI. Sealed by the Holy Spirit

I. ADOPTION

Ephesians 1:4-5

even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

- Adoption = becoming God's sons and daughters with all the privileges implied

Why adopted? To be holy and blameless (dual blessing and responsibility)

- Blameless = We have something removed from us
 - Previously: we were sinners and objects of wrath/punishment
 - God removes the debt and zeros out the balance

Romans 3:23

for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

- Holy = we have something given to us
- God gives us the righteousness of Christ
 - God opens the vault of heaven and gives us the full benefits of His grace (places positive balance)

2 Corinthians 5:21

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

- we have all the rights and benefits of being God's child.

Adoption in Roman system

- The head of the family usually adopted a son to pass along the family name and inheritance

Doctrine of Adoption (vs. Justification)

- Doctrine of justification: declared not guilty
- Doctrine of adoption: highest blessing for Christians
- Why? We are loved by God (he gets down from bench as judge, and brings us home with Him as our Father)

Question: How do we get adopted in God's family?

Salvation is not caused by any human merit

Ephesians 1:5

he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

- "According to the purpose of his will" = Not caused by any human merit
- God's election is meant to give us profound confidence and security so that we do not despair in visitations of great difficulty

Salvation comes through divine love and choice alone.

Ephesians 1:6

to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

- We are to pray and preach the Gospel
- Not be concerned in determining who is elected or not
- Pre-destination is meant to assure us during difficult situations
 - Not be source of pride or condemnation of others
 - God: "I love you before the world began so be assured"
 - God shouts with message of everlasting love where you have been loved since the beginning of the world, are always His, and have peace/grace in trial.

Application

If you put your faith in Christ, you become a child of God.

If you have put your faith in Christ, you have been cloaked with Christ

- You are covered with Christ's righteousness
- You desire to become like Christ not to earn His favor (which you already have) but to honor Him.
 - Trust Him. God knows better, always.

If you have put faith in Christ, you are united with Christ's larger family

- treat fellow Christians like family
- Pray and love them, give grace and forgive