

God's Generous Gift of Grace 4

Ephesians 1:3-14 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, ⁴ even as **he chose us** in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ **he predestined us for adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of **his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.** ⁷ In him **we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,** ⁸ which **he lavished upon us**, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making **known to us the mystery of his will**, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. ¹¹ In him we have **obtained an inheritance**, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might **be to the praise of his glory.** 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,** ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, **to the praise of his glory.**

❖ Introduction

- **Again, We are looking at the Generosity of God**
 - **Specifically in His gift of Grace**
- **In these verses, Paul is listing a number of things that are true of those believed:**
 - The Word of Truth
 - And Were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.
 - If that is true of you, then rejoice today, because you have been given more than you can imagine
 - God has changed your course of history
 - He has reversed the curse of death
 - And given you eternal life
 - With rewards
- **According to His Grace**
 - Based off of His grace
 - **Everything mentioned in a positive manner for the sealed believer of the Word of Truth**
 - Has been given as a result of the grace of God...
 - That Paul says has been lavished on you..
- **So, I ask that we live accordingly...**
 - We give our time, possessions and energy to the generous God who has given us grace
- **Reminder:**
 - There is oh so much more in these verses than we will get to today or have gotten to the last few weeks
 - **I want to focus on the main things that God has done, is doing and will be doing for us**

❖ Outline:

- **Here are my main points for today**
 - Telling you where we are going, gonna tell you when we get there and then remind you where we went.
- Underline main words in the text... so you see what we have done here.

❖ Remember Our Corrupt Nature

- **Before We Can Understand the Richness of this Grace**
- **We must understand our corrupt and depraved spiritual conditions**
 - **We are born into sin**
 - **We are to blame because:**
 - We were represented in Adam... He did what any of us would have done...
 - So we are equally to blame...
 - **You may say, no, I would have done differently**
 - I ask you, have you done differently since hearing God's Word?
 - **Have We not all Knowingly and Willingly rebelled against God?**
- **Carefully Consider yourself**
 - **Our lives are short**
 - They are filled with rebellion and sin
 - **Let us not marginalize our sin against God...**
 - Let us grow in our understanding of its depth and darkness
- **Carefully consider God's thoughts towards us all**
 - God is so Holy and set apart...
 - These sins that we marginalize... we make them out to be nothing
 - Are infinitely terrible in the eyes of God
- **God banished Adam and Eve from the Garden for:**
 - One Sin... Only One...
 - And He cursed them with death...
 - Because of one sin...
- **God created a place called hell**
 - That he describes as a place with burning and smoke and torment
 - It serves as more than an illustration of his thoughts toward sin and rebellion
- **It Took the death of His Son**
 - To reverse the curse of sin
 - To reverse death
- **Yet: God Is Gracious to us even in our most wretched of states...**
 - This is a great and glorious God
- **Paul Reminds The Ephesians in Chapter 2**
 - **Ephesians 2:1-3 And you were dead in the trespasses and sins ² in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— ³ among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.**
- **To understand the richness of God's grace, we must consider the depth of our spiritual poverty**

- ❖ **1) God Has Been Rich Toward Us in Grace**
 - According to the Riches of His Grace
- ❖ **2) God Has Chosen Us**
 - Jesus chose to give sinners Grace
- ❖ **3) God Has Adopted Us**
 - As benevolent parent would choose to adopt a child with no Hope
- ❖ **4) God Has Redeemed Us**
 - ⁷ **In him we have redemption through his blood,**
 - **Redemption – Slavery**

- **Redemption: Freedom Bought**
- **His Death Buys our Freedom**

❖ 5) God Has Forgiven Our Sins

- **the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight**
- **Trespasses: Lets Begin with our Trespasses...** what we have been forgive of...
 - So, here we begin to see a little more clearly (if it was not already clear) why we need redemption
 - **Trespasses – This word does not just describe missing the mark...**
 - As we define sin so often... We say, we have missed the mark of God's standard...
 - This word here describes and intentional falling
 - It indicates reckless and willful sin
- **Forgiveness...**
 - Greek word: *aphesis*
 - This word's meaning is: to put away or send away...
- **Forgiveness:**
 - The sinner has been discharged of all trespasses... they are now ancient history

❖ 6) God Has Shown Us His Will

- ⁹ **making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.**
- **His Will was a Mystery for hundreds of years**
 - **But through Christ and knowing Christ, we are in on something extremely Amazing**
 - Through Faith in Christ... the whole world (not just Jewish people)
 - ◆ Can gain eternal life.
 - It is By the grace of God and through Faith in God... Not by working our way into heaven

❖ 7) God Has Given Us An Inheritance

- ¹¹ **In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.**
- **We Will Inherit Eternal Life**
 - A big part of our inheritance will be eternal life...
 - The ability to live forever...
 - It is not only a possibility for children of God...
 - It is a certainty
- **Our inheritance is everlasting...**
 - **1 Peter 1:4 to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

❖ 8) God Has Given Us The Gospel

- ¹³ **In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him,**
- **The Catalyst – The Gospel...**
 - Here is where it all began for us.
 - God has given us the gospel
 - The Word of truth – the gospel of your salvation
- **4 Main Things to Look at Here**

- 1) You Heard
- 2) The Word of Truth
- 3) You Believed
- 4) What is it you believed, and what should you do with it.

➤ **1) When you Heard**

- Heard... Hearing... with the ear and with your mind
- Do not take it for granted the hundreds of times you have heard the message of Christ
 - Not everyone has had that opportunity...
 - It is amazing to think that there are places on this earth
 - where people have yet to hear the Word of God
- God ordained that you hear the Word at such and such place and time in your life.

➤ **2) The Word of Truth is the Gospel of your Salvation**

- **The Situation: You were at one time going your own way**
 - And maybe you are still.
 - You believed many things, maybe even believed a bunch of lies...
 - Maybe you did not know what to make of what you had been told
 - **Maybe you were going along clueless to the fact that:**
 - ◆ 1) You were a great sinner in the eyes of God
 - ◆ 2) That there is a Holy God that demands your life...
 - ◆ 3) Therefore you were lost,
 - Lost spiritually... you may have knew where you were standing
 - Knew where you wanted to go in life...
 - And that was the worst thing... you thought you safe,
 - You thought you were in the right place...
- **Illustration:**
 - ◆ Myself... I was so very foolish
 - ◆ Played sports, tried to study hard and make good grades...
 - ◆ Had a plan in my life...
 - ◆ I foolishly wanted to be a basketball player... it was a pipe dream...
 - ◆ I hoped I would grow taller... but in the end I would have been too short and too slow
 - ◆ I planned to make lots of money... If I couldn't do basketball, I would use academics
 - ◆ I thought I could make good enough grades to get a good enough job to make lots of money
- **I was Wrong: God has other plans for my life.**
 - ◆ Although I knew of Him, and believed fully in his existence...
 - ◆ I did not know Him... But He introduced Himself to me one day...
 - ◆ And the way He did this was through the Gospel...
 - ◆ I was lost... and I needed salvation... I needed to be saved from my ways...
 - ◆ Jesus gave me the worst news ever...
 - I was a sinner with a debt I could not pay...
- **Then He offered me a way for my debts to be forgiven...**
 - ◆ And that was the good news of the gospel...
- **IN a world full of false ways to God or to Heaven**
 - Filled with false worship
 - A light of truth breaks in amongst the lies
- **What Jesus came and did in the flesh**
 - Is now preserved in the Word... in the gospel
 - So that those who believe...

- Will be saved...
- **Those who are saved will experience the generosity of the grace of God**
 - God has been gracious and generous enough to offer himself
 - And to make sure we hear about it, so we can experience Jesus for ourselves
- **You Believed – Your Response was to believe the message given to you.**
 - Hopefully your response was to believe...
 - People can have a head knowledge that God exists and Jesus is His Son...
 - But never believe...
 - Believing means so much more than just giving mental affirmation to a statement...
- **Believing – Is Agreeing with God in such a way, that you stake your whole life on what He says**
- **What You Believed: The Word of Truth**
 - Jesus came to this earth in the flesh...
 - God who had dwelt in heaven in community with the Father and Spirit
 - Left heaven...
 - Took off His glory, His majesty... Humbled Himself to become a Servant Man...
 - Jesus lived a perfect Life.
 - He shared God the Father with everyone that would listen
 - He was misunderstood by the religious leaders of His time
 - **They wanted to kill Him...**
 - And this worked right into the plans of God...
 - Because Jesus did not come here to be king of an earthly kingdom
 - He had another mission...
 - **Jesus Mission was to die.**
 - He described Himself as a grain of wheat that must fall to the earth and die
 - And then after its death it would spring up and bear fruit.
 - **Jesus came as a Lamb**
 - John the Baptist called Him the Lamb of God
 - In the midst of a culture that would understand clearly that John was calling Him
 - A sacrificial man...
 - Jesus as a lamb symbolized the lambs that died every year for the payment for the covering of peoples sins...
 - Which was a symbol of the One who Would Come to take away sin One day...
 - By His own death...
 - **Jesus was arrested and tried and mocked and spat upon**
 - He was hung on a cross
 - And He hung there until He breathed His last...
 - **And in His Death he:**
 - Became sin for us...
 - He who knew no sin became sin...
 - In His death He justified all who would believe on Him...
 - ◆ He made them righteous...
 - **Jesus was buried...**
 - He lay in the grave...
 - His followers did not fully understand...
 - They went to the grave on the third day..
 - **Jesus Rose from the grave**
 - It was impossible for death to Hold the Author of Life...

- He appeared to Mary
- He appeared to the disciples
- He appeared to 500 at one time...
- He appeared to many witnesses...
- And these witnesses would tell His story...
- The Story of Jesus Is the Word of Truth...
- The Story of Jesus is the Gospel of Salvation...
- **And all who believed their testimony...**
 - Would be saved... they would have their sins removed...
 - They would be chosen, adopted, redeemed and forgiven...
- **Those who believed were given the Holy Spirit**

❖ 9) God Has Assured Us By Giving Us His Spirit

- **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,** ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,
- **This Sealing of a Person by the Holy Spirit is Dependent on the previous phrase...**
 - **Namely:** when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him,
 - **So, First of all...** You Hear... And it is the Word of Truth, or the Gospel that you hear...
 - **And Secondly You believe...**
 - Then... You are sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.
- **A seal was something put on a document**
 - To show that the document was valid... that it came from whoever sealed it
 - And what was in it was what the writer of the document intended as true
 - It gave validity to the document
- **The Holy Spirit is our seal**
 - God says that He has redeemed us
 - He has forgiven us
 - He is giving us an inheritance
 - All of these wonderful things...
 - **How do we know it is true?**
 - Now this only makes sense to those who have the Holy Spirit living within them
 - Truly... and know it...
- **Romans 9:9-11** ⁹You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him. ¹⁰ But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. ¹¹ If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you.
 - **What an amazing set of verses...**
 - Holy Spirit dwells in you
 - If you do not have the Spirit... you do not belong to god
 - The Spirit is Life.. even though your body is dying and sinful..
 - The Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead...
 - ◆ Dwells in you....
 - Therefore He will do the same for you...
 - WOW WOW WOW
- **Great Assurance....We know it is true...**
 - Because the Holy Spirit is in us...
 - He is like a down payment until we get the rest of what has been promised to us...

- **This is amazing...**
 - It is so amazing because the Holy Spirit is the greatest thing that could ever happen to us
 - God himself is actually living within each of us
- **Think about this like this:**
 - What if we have been given these promises...
 - Told we have redemption and forgiveness of sins...
 - Told we should fight sin, and hide God's word in our heart...
 - Yet, the Holy Spirit was never given to us...
- **Wow... that would be so sad and powerless**
 - We would be unable to live the Christian life...
 - We would have a difficult time changing our behavior
 - Our fellowship with God would be diminished...
- **God has given us His Spirit**
 - **Romans 8:16** ¹⁶The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ,
 - **1 John 3:24** ²⁴Whoever keeps his commandments abides in God, and God in him. And by this we know that he abides in us, by the Spirit whom he has given us.
- **The Seal means we are His...**
 - We are the children of God
 - And our assurance is the Holy Spirit of God within us.

❖ 10) God Should Be Blessed and Praised By Men

- **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,**
- **⁶to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.**
- **¹²so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.**
- **¹⁴who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**
- **Our Response: It is clear from these verses**
- **We love to praise everything else in the world...**
 - Football players, friends and family
 - When our children do good things...

❖ 11) God Did This According to His Plan

- **4 before the foundation of the world,**
- **5 he predestined us**
- **5 according to the purpose of his will,**
- **according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time,**
- **11 predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will,**
- **God is always working... Always knows what He is doing... Always has a plan**
 - Nothing has thrown God off...
 - Nothing has confused God
 - The whole world was in confusion
 - But God was able to reach into this world with its billions of peoples...
 - And bring about His perfect will
- **He figured this out before He made the earth**
 - Which means, satan, and sin and death were a part of the plan...
 - He does not author sin
 - But He did create a world that He said was good

- That has the capacity for much evil...
- **And in the midst of man and satan**
 - Trying to mess up His perfect world...
 - God had a plan to redeem it...
 - To make it perfect without annihilating all of its inhabitants...
- **He did this:**
 - According to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will
- Isaiah 46:8-11 ⁸ “Remember this and stand firm, recall it to mind, you transgressors, ⁹ remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like me, ¹⁰ declaring the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done, saying, ‘My counsel shall stand, and I will accomplish all my purpose,’ ¹¹ calling a bird of prey from the east, the man of my counsel from a far country. I have spoken, and I will bring it to pass; I have purposed, and I will do it.

❖ **One More Thing: This is extra**

- Do you see the work of all three person of the Godhead here?
- I title all my points... God did something...
- If you look closely you see the Father, Son and Spirit at work here...
 - the Father’s work of love, Eph 1:3 (choosing us to *holiness*, Eph 1:4; to *sonship*, Eph 1:5; to *acceptance*, Eph 1:6):
 - the Son’s, Eph 1:7 (*redemption*, Eph 1:7; *knowledge of the mystery of His will*, Eph 1:9; *an inheritance*, Eph 1:11);
 - the Holy Spirit’s, Eph 1:13 (*sealing*, Eph 1:13; giving an *earnest* of the inheritance, Eph 1:14).

❖ **God’s Generosity...**

- **What is your response?**

❖ **Invitation**

- Again: I am Like a banker that comes to your home today
- To offer you freedom from all your debts... house not car note, furniture notes...
 - All future bills payed, etc
 - Also, going to offer you a huge savings account
 - And a big multi billion dollar trust fund
- This is the offer today
- Why would you not whole heartedly accept it?