

God's Generous Gift of Grace 1

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

- To say these verses are rich with the grace and mercy of God would be an understatement...
- **Today We begin looking at the Generosity of God**
 - We will be looking at God's Generous gift of grace toward us all
- **I will be completely honest**
 - I will say I want to teach you about God's generosity toward you
 - And that you will respond by being generous as well
 - I want to teach us to give of our time and money and energy...
- **You may wonder if these verses teach us the importance of giving...**
 - And I would say, absolutely
 - Absolutely they teach us about giving
 - They teach about the God who has given to us
 - And not just given to us, but given to us lavishly...
- **Lavishly: Richly**
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- **So, I will expound on these verses**
 - I will not twist them or turn them to my own meaning
 - Rather we will look at them as they are
 - I will do exposition of these verses
 - And I believe they will bring us to a better and more clear understanding
 - Of the richness of God toward us sinners...
- **Our Response:**
 - **As a way of applying these verses in our own lives...**
 - I will certainly encourage you to do two things
 - 1) Praise and glorify God for his richness toward you
 - 2) Encourage you to give God your time and money or possessions and energy
 - ◆ Not because He needs them.... He doesn't
 - ◆ Rather, you need to for yourself
 - **What other response ought we to have? Answer: none**
 - We are not responding to earn favor with God...
 - He has been rich toward us when we do not deserve it...

- **We respond because God has been good toward us...**
 - ◆ And as a natural outflow of our gratitude
 - ◆ We: 1) Set our hearts and mind on Him in praise
 - ◆ 2) We set our life toward living out our professed praise

❖ **Outline:**

- We Will Not Get deep into everything these verses offer
- Here are are my main points for today
- **There are a lot but I will be brief with all of them**
 - We can use these as a starting point to placing these verses in our hearts
 - Maybe this will help us retain some information
- Context
- A Look at Our Corrupt Nature
- God Has Been Rich Toward Us
- 1) God Has Been Rich Toward Us in Grace
- 2) God Has Chosen Us
- 3) God Has Adopted Us
- 4) God Has Redeemed Us
- 5) God Has Forgiven Our Sins
- 6) God Has Shown Us His Will
- 7) God Has Given Us An Inheritance
- 8) God Has Given Us The Gospel
- 9) God Has Given Us His Spirit
- 10) God Should Be Blessed and Praised By Men

❖ **Context**

- **Paul is writing to the Ephesian Church**
 - Paul was very fond of this church.
 - He is writing to them from prison
 - He had spent three years with them
 - He started the church by reasoning with the Jews in Ephesus
 - We see in Acts he stayed for two straight years teaching them
- **Paul had set Timothy up as an Elder/Pastor**
 - So the church had great leadership
- **Jesus wrote a letter to the Ephesian church after Paul had written this letter**
 - You are familiar with what He told them in Revelation ch 2
 - He told them they had abandoned the love they had at first
 - And they needed to repent
 - Or have their church die out
- **In These Particular Verses**
 - We see how Gracious God has Been Toward us

❖ **A Look at 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**
 - The Bible teaches it was handed down to us by our father Adam
 - There is nothing we could do about it...
 - So we may ask the question, then why are we to blame

- **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
 - **I shared with many of you last week my thoughts toward my sins as a child**
 - I shared that many considered me to be a regular boy
 - A pretty good respectful kid
 - **But inside, darkness was alive**
 - Working in me to take what was not mine
 - To hurt others with my hands or by my mouth
 - To lie if it so suited me
 - **Pride was at the root of it all**
 - Pride to put myself first... to look toward my own comfort first
 - To be self sufficient
 - **And even though my sin:**
 - Was just in the developing stages...
 - It wanted to break out into adulthood as soon as it could
 - **But praise be to God He saved me**
 - And has begun His sanctifying work in me
 - So that although that sinful nature is still in me...
 - It has not been put to death yet...
 - **God is working on it...**
 - And He is telling me to work on it... And has given me all I need to destroy sin
- **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
- **I have no issue calling us all wretched sinners...**
 - We are that at best...
 - And I can say this with all assurance because of God's actions toward sin and sinners
- **Yet: God Is Gracious to us even in our most wretched of states...**

- This is a great and glorious God
- 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

- **who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing** in the heavenly places
- according to **the riches of his grace,**⁸ which **he lavished upon us,** in all wisdom and insight
- ⁶to the praise of **his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.**
- **Blessed us in Christ with every Spiritual blessing in the heavenly places**
 - **Notice... We are blessed in Christ.**
 - **Notice it is with every spiritual blessing**
 - Do not be confused here and think Paul mean just blessings that are spiritual for us...
 - Rather, they originate from God... The source is spiritual
 - And in all the ways we have been blessed
 - ◆ Whether we are blessed in our heart or mind or body or possessions...
 - ◆ We have been blessed by God...
 - **In the heavenly places...**
 - We notice also that our blessings are not just for now
 - But also and already in heaven.
 - Those that are His, have been blessed here on earth and also in heaven
 - **This is all done in Christ...**
 - Without Jesus, none of this is possible...
- **We have been lavishly given the grace of God**
 - After speaking of God: Choosing us, Adopting Us, Redeeming us and Forgiving us
 - Paul explains that God did so according to the riches of His Grace... which He lavished upon us
- **Riches of His Grace**
 - **The Grace of God is his unearned favor on you...**
 - God is just good to you in a way that has nothing to do with your own worth
 - ◆ Which is great considering our spiritually corrupt nature
 - Here we see that God has riches of grace...
 - ◆ Riches here means: and extreme and abundant amount of grace...
 - **God then takes his extreme abundant riches of grace**
 - And He pours them out on His children
- **He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight**
 - **Lavished is such a great term to use here...**
 - It means to be given in abundance... above and beyond to overflowing...
 - **Picture with me a beautiful water fountain...**
 - And it is flowing out with water from its spout
 - It is filling up the tank surrounding it...
 - And the tank or bowl or whatever you want to call it...
 - Is overflowing... continually...
 - **Once the tank is filled, does the fountain stop flowing?**
 - No, it continues on and on...
 - As it continually fills and overflows the sides of the tank...
 - **God has lavished his grace upon us...**
 - It will never run out...
 - You will never use it all up, there will always be more there for His children
- **Again we see we have been blessed with grace**
 - ⁶to the praise of **his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.**

- After saying we have been predestined for adoption....
 - He says it is to the praise of His glorious grace...
- **This glorious grace...**
 - Has blessed us... in the Beloved...
 - In Christ... the one who is loved by God...
 - And because of God's love for the Son
 - And the Son's sacrifice and love toward us...
 - We have been blessed with grace in Christ... the Beloved

❖ 2) God Has Chosen Us

- **⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.**
- Jesus told His Disciples:
 - **John 15:16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide,**
 - Here we see Jesus telling his disciples that He was responsible for their coming to Him
 - And this is significant as they represent the church in many ways
 - Especially in how Jesus calls and loves them
- **God has chosen us... before the foundation of the world**
- **Consider Your sins again...**
 - How you have rebelled against God in so many ways
 - Not just before knowing of His grace in Jesus, but even after
- **Yet, God chose you... in your sin...**
 - And He did this before He even made the earth...
 - He made Adam, knowing that it would mean the torture and death of His Son...
- **And unless you be tempted to think:**
 - That is not a big deal, He is God, He knew that death could not hold him...
 - Then why don't you volunteer to go over to the middle east
 - And allow them to torture you and then kill you
 - But, on top of that, add the sins of the whole entire world into your torture and death
 - Add to that the wrath of God being poured out on you as you are tortured and die
- **We will never in a million years understand what Jesus went through on that cross**
 - All we see is the torture and the death and the agony coming from Him
 - We will never know what it is like to lose fellowship with the Father
 - Whom he has had an eternal relationship with
 - And to have the father pour out His wrath upon His Son...
 - We will never understand this
- **God chose us...**
 - Knowing what manner of people we are and would be
 - And another thing to consider...
 - No One is good enough...
 - **We often think that God chooses us because He knew we would do right**
 - But what do you do with verses that say that none does good...
 - **When God looked upon all the people throughout all time...**
 - He did not see one person deserving of forgiveness...
 - Not one unrebelling person...
 - We were and are all born and living in sin...
- **God chose Sinners to give them grace**

➤ **Again... Consider yourself... Consider God's lavishing His grace upon you by choosing you**

❖ **3) God Has Adopted Us**

▪ **In Love⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons** through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

➤ We have been predestined... for adoption

➤ **Just a second on predestined...**

- It simply means predetermined... or that God determined to do something before it ever happened
- We have not just been chosen, but chosen out of all the peoples of the world
- There is a distinction shown here in our being chosen...
- We were predestined for adoption...

➤ **We have been adopted as sons... through Jesus Christ**

- So, as we see, our source of adoption is through Jesus Christ
- Without Jesus we can not be adopted...

➤ **When we think of adoption**

- We think of a couple that wants to bring a child into their home
- And they may do this for a myriad of reasons...

➤ **Usually a couple wants to choose a really special child**

- They want one that is cute and beautiful
- One that seems smart and perfect
- And a young one that they can teach and mold into their way of being

➤ **It is rare to see someone go for the child:**

- With a mental illness
- A disability
- Missing a limb or being blind or deaf
- An older child with rebellious tendencies...
- And I am not saying that any of these are less deserving...
- **Illustration: Dolphin Tale and God's beautiful design in disabilities...**

➤ **Most people want the "good kids"**

➤ **God did not choose the cute and sweet kids to adopt**

- God chose the ones that had disabilities... ones with problems...
- He did not adopt us because we were desirable...
- He desired us... and has a plan to change us so that
 - **that we should be holy and blameless before him.**

➤ **Adoption**

- What a beautiful picture of God's grace toward us...
- **Consider the beauty of adoption for a second...**
 - Usually there is an orphan child
 - Or a child that its parent or parents can not take care of
 - So, in a sense, this child has no one to care for it, no one that wants it
- **So, usually along come a very kind and caring couple**
 - That want to nurture and care for this child
 - The child brings no bank account, no special abilities
 - Yet, the parents value the child, and see great worth in the child...
- **So, the benevolent parents take the child in as their own...**
 - And the child is their own... it is now their child by law...
 - And they love and care for and provide for this child

➤ **Even though we were corrupt spiritually and in rebellion against God...**

- He has adopted us as sons...
- And with this adoption we gain citizenship in heaven
- We are now considered the children of the king of the universe...
- We are royalty
- God has been richly good toward us...

❖ 4) God Has Redeemed Us

- ⁷ **In him we have redemption through his blood,**
- **Redemption – the act of redeeming or atoning for a fault or mistake...**
 - It also has the meaning of deliverance or rescue...
- **We had sold ourselves into slavery into sin...**
 - And we are unable to buy our way out
 - We do not have the currency...
- **But God does, and it is the blood of His Son**
 - Therefore, through the death of Jesus we are redeemed
- *Greek, “our (literally, ‘the’) redemption”;* the redemption which is the grand subject of all revelation, and especially of the New Testament (Ro 3:24), namely, from the power, guilt, and penal consequences of sin (Mt 1:21). If a man were unable to redeem himself from being a bond-servant, his kinsman might redeem him (Le 25:48). Hence, antitypically the Son of God became the Son of man, that as our kinsman He might redeem us (Mt 20:28). Another “redemption” follows, namely, that “of the purchased possession” hereafter (Eph 1:14).

❖ 5) God Has Forgiveness Our Sins

- **the forgiveness of our trespasses,**
- M
- **the forgiveness of sins—Greek, “the remission of our transgressions”:** not merely “pretermision,” as the *Greek* (Ro 3:25) ought to be translated. This “remission,” being the explanation of “redemption,” includes not only deliverance from sin’s penalty, but from its pollution and enslaving power, negatively; and the reconciliation of an offended God, and a satisfaction unto a just God, positively.

❖ 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 Christ ¹⁰ **as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.**
- M

❖ 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,
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❖ 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,**
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❖ 9) God Has Given Us His Spirit

- **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,** ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it,
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- **sealed**—as God’s confirmed children, by the Holy Spirit as the seal (Ac 19:1–6; Ro 8:16, 23; 1 Jn 3:24). see on 2 Co 1:22; A seal impressed on a document gives undoubted validity to the contract in it (Jn 3:33; 6:27; compare 2 Co 3:3). So the sense of “the love of God shed abroad in the heart by the Holy Ghost” (Ro 5:5), and the sense of adoption given through the Spirit at regeneration (Ro 8:15, 16), assure believers of God’s good will to them. The Spirit, like a seal, impresses on the soul at regeneration the image of our Father. The “sealing” by the Holy Spirit is spoken of as *past* once for all. The witnessing to our hearts that we are the children of God, and heirs (Eph 1:11), is the Spirit’s *present* testimony, the “earnest of the (coming) inheritance” (Ro 8:16–18).

❖ **10) God Should Be Blessed and Praised By Men**

- Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
- ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.
- ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory.
- ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

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❖ **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).

❖ Invitation