

God's Generous Gift of Grace 2

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 continue looking at the Generosity of God**
- **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...
- **These verses teach us the importance of giving...**
 - 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**
 - Abundantly... like and overflowing infinite fountain
- **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...
- **Theme: of verses and book.... Who we are in Christ... what God has done for us**
 - Tells us who we were and who we are now in Christ...
 - What was true of us, and what is true of us now..
- **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:

▪ 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.

- Context
- A Look at Our Corrupt Nature
- 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
- **11) God Did This According to His Plan**

❖ 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
- 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

❖ 4) God Has Redeemed Us

- ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood,
- **Redemption – Slavery**
 - **Illustrate: Simply Put... We were like slaves...**
 - Picture the idea of a slave...
 - A person owned by someone else...
 - ◆ During bible times, many people were slaves because they were in such great debt
 - ◆ Or had committed a crime

- ◆ Or were captured and made a slave
 - Its like being in prison,
 - Slaves were treated like animals...
 - **I used to go to the sale with my Dad as he bought and sold cattle...**
 - ◆ If he wanted to buy a cow, he had to make a bid and pay a price with dollars...
 - **The Idea of Our Redemption is that we were once slaves to something else...**
 - I have already explained that we were ever so sinful...
 - Now picture yourself if you can, as a slave being brought before men to be sold...
 - You have no rights, no freedom... How would you feel...
 - Now this may seem foreign to you...
 - But it perfectly illustrates our former or current state...
 - **Your objection: I am no slave... I am free to make my own choices...**
 - Thinking that, doesn't make it true...
 - You are enslaved to sin... Just go ahead and try to stop...
 - Try to not sin this week.
 - Try, without the enabling of Jesus to stop the sinful passions of your body and mind
 - ◆ As we see from Eph 2.1-3
 - **Now, this applies to the youngest and the oldest in this room without the aid of Jesus**
 - ◆ Children lie and take and are selfish
 - ◆ Adults... well... we are that and then some...
- **Redemption: Freedom Bought**
- **Now Consider your slavery again...**
 - And consider as you sit on the auction block
 - Already owned by an evil owner...
 - Ten more evil owners are there to buy you and keep you into slavery...
 - **But there is one who wants to buy your freedom...**
 - He wants to take his money and buy you out of slavery...
 - So you no longer are under the bondage of a slave master...
 - If you could you would buy yourself out of slavery... but you do not have the ability
 - **So, this benevolent Person purchases you with his own hard earned currency**
 - And He sets you free from slavery
 - You no longer owe anything...
 - This is the meaning of redemption...
- **This is What Jesus has Done:**
- **In Him...** In Jesus
 - **We Have Redemption**
 - We have been bought back
 - **By His blood..**
 - And this signifies Jesus giving His life...
 - His dying on our behalf...
- **His Death Buys our Freedom**
- **Hebrews 9:22b ... and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**
 - **The Life of Jesus was spilled out as He died...**
 - His blood being shed signified His life being given...
 - And it is this shedding of blood, this giving of His life...
 - ◆ That translates into the forgiveness of sins...
 - **The blood of Jesus poured out, meaning His life being given**

- Was the currency needed for redemption...

- ◆ Nothing else was suitable...

- ◆ No one else's blood was capable...

➤ **Consider how it is explained elsewhere in the Bible...**

▪ **This is exactly how the Children of Israel coming out of Egypt is described**

- They were enslaved by the Pharaoh in Egypt right?

- Then God buys their freedom... He says..

- **Deuteronomy 15:15 ¹⁵ You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God redeemed you;**

▪ **Titus 2:14 ¹⁴ who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness**

- We have been redeemed from being lawless... living against the ways of God

▪ **1 Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not ^aredeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood* of Christ.**

- **We were redeemed from a futile way of life that we inherited...**

- ◆ Futile... Useless, meaningless, empty...

- ◆ How would you like that? Come to the end of your life... and look back...

- And see it was empty... full of a bunch of nothing... Your life was meaningless...

- **Our redemption was with something greater than silver or gold...**

- ◆ The Precious blood of Jesus...

- ◆ The Life of God... the greatest treasure in the eternity of the universe

➤ **Then We Have A Great Promise With our Redemption**

▪ **Psalm 34:22 ²² The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.**

- We will not be condemned... we will not be destroyed...

- Destruction is coming to this world... but not to those who take refuge in the Lord Jesus...

- **Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

➤ **Our Response to Our Redemption... Should be to live for and praise God as our Redeemer...**

▪ **Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.**

➤ **Remember: God Has Been Rich Toward Us in His Grace**

- Let us Respond Generously with our time, money and energy

- Without complaining and grumbling and bragging

❖ **5) God Has Forgiveness 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**

➤ **Truly... when Paul writes "the forgiveness of our trespasses..."**

- He is restating what he means by what he just wrote...

- He had just wrote, "**we have redemption through His blood...**

- Then he says... "**,the forgiveness of our trespasses"**

- He is saying that our redemption means our forgiveness...

- Paul does this a lot, He says something great, then explains what he meant by that...

➤ **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**
- **This is like what the children of Israel did after God was gracious to them...**
 - They quickly turned and began following idols... false gods...
- **King Saul was like this when God gave him a specific command and he did not listen...**
 - Then again he consulted a medium, or someone who speaks with the dead
- **As you see: These are no good things that we have heaped on to our account before God...**
 - We have hundreds... done willfully and without realizing it as well...
 - And even just one is enough to condemn us to death...
 - ◆ Just like Adam and Eve had one sin cause their death...
 - So, this is why the forgiveness part is so wonderful.

➤ **Forgiveness...**

- Greek word: *aphesis*
- This word's meaning is: to put away or send away...
- **This is the word used in Hebrews 9:22**
 - **Hebrews 9:22b ... and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.**
 - We have often translated this... there is no remission of sins...
- **Remission** is a really good term to use to understand the meaning of forgiveness
 - ◆ **We use it to describe what happens to a person who has had cancer**
 - ◆ But, it has left them, it is gone... it is in remission...
- **Luke uses this particular word numerous times in the gospel of Luke**
 - And as a doctor, we see why...
 - ◆ Used in medical language of the relaxation of disease.
 - ◆ These verses use a form of the verb similarly...
 - ◆ **Luke 4:39³⁹ And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.**
 - ◆ **John 4:52⁵² So he asked them the hour when he began to get better, and they said to him, "Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him."**
- 1) So, we are able to see our trespasses as a disease...
- 2) This also helps us see our sins, not just as an abstract thing we have done
 - that is acted upon and then over...
 - Rather, it is a state of being...
 - It is a part of who we are...
 - We are diseased... we have a fever... we have a sickness
- 3) We see that forgiveness means... the diseased state of being sinful
 - has been taken from us... it has left us...

➤ **Forgiveness:**

- The sinner has been discharged of all trespasses... they are now ancient history
- **Isaiah 44:22 I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.**
 - They have been covered over...
- **Psalms 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.**
- Let's look at Psalm 103:12 in its surrounding context... good good stuff here...
 - **Psalm 103:8-14 "The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.⁹ He will not always chide, nor will he keep his anger forever.¹⁰ He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities.¹¹ For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him;¹² as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us.¹³ As a father shows**

compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. ¹⁴ For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

- Man... this is really good stuff right here...
- Where do we start... Look at the emboldened words...
 - ◆ My favorite thing is that He does not deal with us according to our sins...
- **Romans 4:7-8 ⁷“Blessed are those whose lawless deeds are forgiven, and whose sins are covered; ⁸blessed is the man against whom the Lord will not count his sin.”**
- This is a verse of praise and adoration and thanksgiving to God...
 - ◆ This should be our prayer and praise right now...

➤ **Notice: According to the riches of His grace... ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight**

▪ **And this grace is through Jesus Christ...**

- This is all done through Jesus... Grace upon grace comes to us from and through Jesus..

▪ We spent a while talking about this last week...

▪ **God has an abundance of grace...**

- It is actually a never ending supply (praise God!)

▪ **God Has been generous with His Grace...**

- And it has shown up in so many different ways...

▪ Lavished upon us...

❖ **A Word About the Title...**

➤ And also how we should be continually amazed and captivated with God

➤ God's Generous Gift of Grace...

▪ Gift of one thing: Grace...

➤ **As we begin to dig into this gift of grace...**

▪ We see it is multi faceted, there are many levels and many layers...

▪ God's grace covers so many wonderful gifts for us...

▪ That we have only begun to dig into...

❖ **Invitation:**

➤ Respond Generously in your life to God's Generosity in giving to you lavishly!

❖ **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.

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❖ **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**.

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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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❖ 11) God Did This According to His Plan

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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