

The Blessing Of Salvation
 Ephesians: *Blessed Beyond Belief*- Part 1
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Theme Verse For Series:

Ephesians 1:3

³ All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.

What we are going to study is first and foremost meant to amaze us so much that we bring *all praise to God!* God's blessings, when properly understood, lead us to worship.

God wants us to understand His blessings so our hearts can be encouraged. But, He also wants us to appropriate and live these blessings so that others' hearts can be encouraged. God has blessed us with *every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms...* What kind of blessings are these? Spiritual. Where are they held—in the heavenly realms. These are blessings that only believers have access to. And, your job as a Christ follower is to savor these blessings so much that you bring them into visibility for others that can't yet access the heavenly realm because they do not yet know Jesus.

We talked last week about wanting to be a church on mission. We want to push forward the vision of every member of our spiritual family being on mission. We want to accomplish our vision of *loving people to a clear view of Jesus and His mission.* That happened last night.... ! ☺

But, I wonder... why is it so hard for us to share with others about our faith in Jesus? I read an article recently that suggested...and I have been thinking about this—what if I have trouble sharing Jesus because I'm not walking closely enough with Him? What if I have trouble sharing Jesus because God isn't free to work in my life to the degree that He should.

See—the truth is this: *When I see God at work in my life—I want to share it. When I understand my spiritual blessings in all their glory... I cannot help but verbalize what Jesus has done for me.*

Talking with TK about the Operation Barnabas students yesterday... what helps them come alive in their faith is: 1) reading their Bibles and 2) sharing their faith.

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The Blessing Of Salvation:

1. God **Chose** You (Ephesians 1:4-6)

⁴ *Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.* ⁵ *God decided in advance (predestined- “to establish in advance”) to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.* ⁶ *So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.*

God chose you! Savor that! Think about it! Let it settle in! God looked down before time...before creation... He saw you... and He said—*I will make him/her my child. I will adopt him. I will send my son for her.*

Illustration:

All of us can think back to times when we were chosen or left out. Whether it was on the playground as a child... or trying to get a job and in today's economy you're one out of hundreds of applicants... and *you want to be chosen!*

I remember when I was a kid struggling up the social ladder in elementary school. Man- I wanted to be cool. I wanted to be chosen by the popular kids. In sixth grade many of the boys began playing touch football on the playground...

Oh... how good to be chosen. But, we don't just want to be chosen visibly... on the outside...we want people to validate our personality our personal worth... we want others, so deeply to accept us emotionally.

Being chosen by men... we all want to be validated...hurt when people reject us.

We place so much significance on how we perceive that people view us...*why not define our worth and value by how God saw/sees us?*

Applications:

- Value. In economics- value is determined by price. Well- God's price for you was sending His own son to die for your sins. Your value to God is illustrated by what He spent to get you... Jesus. *Why do we ever struggle with significance? Why do we search for validation in so many other places? We need to practice looking in the mirror and verbalizing and savoring—**The One, True, Living God chose me. I am loved...***
- Purpose. Ephesians 2:10.
- God's Sovereignty. Beginnings of verse 4 and 5... *Even before He made the world... God decided in advance...* God can do whatever He wants whenever He wants. He is in control.

I've been thinking a lot about that this week. I've had one of those weeks... my family is sick, equipment is breaking down (copier...car), ad in paper didn't get placed, all of these things going wrong... my frustration builds...

God knows...He saw it in advance...He is in control... I can/must trust... peace...

- Worship. Vs. 6—so we praise God!....

2. God **Redeemed** You (Ephesians 1:7-8; 2:1-5)

⁷ He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. ⁸ He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.

The Holman Christian Standard Bible renders the first part of vs. 7 as: *In Him we have redemption through His blood...* “Redemption” refers to the liberating of someone in captivity. Redemption always implies liberating a captive by paying a great price.

Later in Ephesians, Paul describes in detail the captivity that every person is in before the follow Christ. Ephesians 2:1-5:

^{2:1} Once you were dead because of your disobedience and your many sins. ² You used to live in sin, just like the rest of the world, obeying the devil—the commander of the powers in the unseen world. He is the spirit at work in the hearts of those who refuse to obey God. ³ All of us used to live that way, following the passionate desires and inclinations of our sinful nature. By our very nature we were subject to God’s anger, just like everyone else.

⁴ But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, ⁵ that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God’s grace that you have been saved!)

The Bible makes it clear that salvation is only available through Jesus. Acts 4:12 says: *¹² There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.*” This is counter-cultural. This truth won’t earn you a lot of friends in today’s world. This may not be “tolerant”. It’s certainly not politically correct- but make no mistake- the Bible is very clear—there is one way to salvation. God has ordained and made clear in His word that only through Jesus can men find forgiveness from sins.

Ephesians explains why this is true. Before Jesus, we are trapped in sin. We were very much captive to obeying the devil—captive to following our own lusts and passions and selfishness and all the inclinations of our sinful nature. Because of our sin—we were spiritually dead. We needed rescued. We needed redeemed.

But, the price of violating God’s holiness is so high- no sacrifice could satisfy God’s anger. Jesus is the only conduit through which “a holy God could share His eternal love with a defiled humanity” (Tom Juilen- pg. 17 of Studies In Ephesians). *⁷ He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.*

3. God **Guarantees** His Promise (Ephesians 1:13-14)

¹³ *And now you Gentiles have also **heard the truth**, the Good News that God saves you. And **when you believed in Christ**, he identified you as his own (“you were sealed in Him” NASB) by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. ¹⁴ *The Spirit is God’s guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.**

God’s guarantee is so important. There are many ramifications of the Holy Spirit’s work in sealing us.

- God gives the Holy Spirit as a symbol (or seal) of His *ownership* of us. No longer do we live for ourselves- we live for Him.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20

¹⁹ *Don’t you realize that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who lives in you and was given to you by God? You do not belong to yourself, ²⁰ for God bought you with a high price. So you must honor God with your body.*

- When you transfer ownership of your body, soul, and spirit to your loving Father...He is now invested in you. He will give you every resource to protect His investment and accomplish His perfect plan in you and through you.
- This is the best place to begin an understanding of why genuine salvation is secure. Of course- the security of the believer can seem to be in question if we look at it from our point of view- because we are all sinners and we will make mistakes. But, from God’s point of view- He has taken over ownership. He has given His Holy Spirit- which no one can remove. He has made us *holy and without fault in his eyes* (vs.4).

4. God's **Grace** Makes Salvation **Free** To A Person With **Faith** (Ephesians 2:8-10)

⁸ God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. ⁹ Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it. ¹⁰ For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

What we see of the process of salvation:

- Pre Christ-follower is chosen by God before time.
- Jesus does the work of redemption.
- Pre Christ-follower **hears** the truth (*how important it is for us to tell others! We can't just live the Gospel in front of them- it must be told and heard!*)

Romans 10:

¹³ For "Everyone who calls on the name of the LORD will be saved."^[a]

¹⁴ But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? ¹⁵ And how will anyone go and tell them without being sent? That is why the Scriptures say, "How beautiful are the feet of messengers who bring good news!"^[b]

- Pre Christ-follower hears and believes. Faith activates adoption and the giving of the Holy Spirit- sealing- and the baby Christ follower is created anew, assured of eternal hope, and fully prepared for a life of meaningful service to his/her Lord.
- We bless God- by mouth and with our lives.