

Every Spiritual Blessing

Ephesians 1:3–14

Key verse: 3 “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.”

One day I was driving a long distance, exhausted. I found a coffee machine at a rest stop. When I opened my wallet, I found only one 100-dollar bill—a good-for-nothing sheet of paper!

Today’s message is about the scope of God’s grace. If we focus on our immediate needs and wants—like the coffee in my story—we may not appreciate God’s immense blessings. In this passage, the Apostle Paul guides us to the mountaintop of God’s grace and shows us the monumental range of God’s grace. May the Holy Spirit open our spiritual eyes to see every spiritual blessing and “cash it out.”

My message has two parts:

1. the nature of God’s grace
2. the scope of God’s grace in six ways

I. The nature of God’s grace (3)

Let’s read verse 3: “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.” As the Apostle Paul stands on the mountain of God’s blessing, he shouts with all his heart: “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ!” This is his “Yahoo, Hurray!” He calls us to put aside urgent tasks for a moment and climb up God’s mountain of blessing. He wants us to see every spiritual blessing so that we can also shout like him.

Why does Paul bless the God and Father of our Lord Jesus? Because He is the Author and Source of every spiritual blessing. He has blessed us in Christ—not only once in the past, but continuously in the present. James 1:17a also says, “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.”

Who can receive God’s blessing? Paul says it is only those in Christ. Are you in Christ?

How can we be truly in Christ? Our union with Christ is first and foremost the work of God the Father and Jesus the Son. Jesus says in John 6:44a, “No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.” He again says in 6:39, “And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.”

What then is our part? Those who are in Christ confess Him as Lord. This reminds us of Romans 10:9: "...if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." With God's work and our faith in Jesus Christ, we are baptized into Him—into His death and resurrection (Ro 6:3–4). We no longer live, but Christ lives in us (Gal 2:20). We become a new creation in Christ (2Co 5:17). We in Christ are the objects of God's blessing. So again, I ask you: are you in Christ?

If so, we are ready to take in the full range of Mount Blessing. In verse 6, the Apostle Paul calls God's blessing His glorious grace. Paul reveals God's glorious grace with a compact phrase: "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places." The noun "blessing" is modified by "every," "spiritual," and "in the heavenly places." This helps us avoid misunderstandings regarding God's grace.

When we contemplate God's grace, many things may come into our minds: family, friends, pets, house, food, water, air, health, education, job, stable government, etc. These are common grace, shared by both the good and the wicked. They meet earthly needs. Some have more and others have less. Yet they cannot give true happiness. Therefore, King Solomon said, "Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities! All is vanity" (Eccles. 1:2).

But Paul proclaims that the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ has blessed us in Him with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. This is not small grace. This is not temporary grace. This is eternal grace.

II. The scope of God's grace (4–14)

The Apostle Paul presents the scope of God's grace in six ways in verses 4–14.

First, God's grace of Election (4)

Let's read verse 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..." Paul begins with "even as," meaning that God's grace reaches all the way back before the foundation of the world—God chose us in Him before we existed.

Does it make sense? The prophet Jeremiah also said God knew him before he was formed in his mother's womb and set him apart before his birth (Jer 1:5). God had us in Christ in eternity. We are not here by accident. God chose us in Christ before we did anything good or bad. We didn't choose God; God chose us in Christ in eternity.

What purpose did God have in choosing us in Christ? Verse 4b says, “that we should be holy and blameless before Him.” To be holy before Him is to be sinless and morally perfect before the Holy One (Mt 5:48). It is also to be consecrated completely to God alone (Lev 21:8). Just as God is holy, so we in Christ should be holy (1Ptr 1:16).

God chose us in Christ also to be blameless before Him. When do you blame your cellphone? When it doesn’t function properly. God chose us in Christ to function properly before Him. Just as God is a God of mission, so we in Christ should be missional. God looks on what we are and what we do (1Sam 16:7).

Some of us feel discouraged as we see ourselves neither holy nor functional as we should. But remember: God’s grace of election was given to us in Christ before the creation of the world. No matter what obstacles are in the way, He will make you holy and blameless in Christ and before Him. It is God’s mission, not yours. He is working on you in love (4c). God will never cancel His grace of election. Romans 11:29 says, “For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.” If you are in Christ, surely you will be holy and blameless before God. Praise God for his irrevocable call and grace!

Second, God’s grace of Adoption (5–6)

Let’s read verse 5: “...he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to his purpose and his will...” To understand adoption as grace, we must remember when God decided and what we were like before. “God predestined” means God already decided to adopt us in Christ as His children in eternity.

In verse 3, God’s name is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This name shows the love relationship between God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ. Can you imagine God predestined that you should have a relationship with God the Father, just as He has had with His Son Jesus in eternity?

If we are still not moved by God’s grace, let us remember who we were. God made Adam out of dust. Like Adam, we are lumps of dirt that will return to the ground. What is worse, we are sinners. Although we know God, we haven’t honored Him as God or given thanks to Him (Ro. 1:19). We have lived proud and rebellious, ignoring Him, living as his enemies. We were objects of God’s wrath.

But behold Paul declares in verse 5: “he (God) predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to his purpose and his will...” Let me ask you, would you adopt an enemy, a criminal, as your own adopted child?

Listen to what God predestined for us through Christ! It isn’t punishment– it’s adoption into His eternal family. We have a Father-and-son relationship that He has had with His

Son Jesus Christ in eternity. We are no longer illegitimate children. We are no longer orphans or beggars. We are His sons and daughters through His Son Jesus Christ! We in Christ can call God, “Abba Father!”

So why do we still live like spiritual orphans? Why do we still beg for what our Father has already promised? Why do we still fear, as if we are not loved? God’s grace of adoption is meant to change how we live.

What would you say to God, knowing His grace of adoption? Let’s shout verse 6 together: “... to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.”

Third, God’s grace of Redemption (7a)

God’s grace of election and adoption is amazing indeed. However, there is a theological issue: God is not only gracious—He is also holy and just. If a holy and just God accepts sinners without dealing with sin, He is not just. So sin must be dealt with according to God’s justice.

With this in mind, let’s read verse 7a: “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses...” Paul points us to Golgotha, where our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified, shedding His blood. Our Lord Jesus Christ redeemed us by paying the wages of our sins, saying, “It is finished!”

God didn’t make us pay the price of our sins. Instead, He made His Son—who had no sin—to be sin for us and crucified Him so that the full price of our sins might be paid. This is God’s grace of redemption, through which we receive forgiveness of our trespasses.

God’s grace of redemption doesn’t stop there. During the Last Supper, our Lord Jesus Christ offered a new covenant in His blood to His disciples. God’s grace of redemption makes His grace of election and adoption possible.

Why does God give us redemption, forgiveness, and a new covenant? Look at verse 7b–8a: “According to the riches of his grace, which he lavishes upon us...” God promised His blessing to us in Christ in Ezekiel 34:26: “And I will make them and the places all around my hill a blessing, and I will send down the showers in their season; they shall be showers of blessing.” In Christ, His promise is fulfilled. Look at verse 8a again: “which he lavished upon us.” It is not “he will lavish...” God’s grace of redemption has already been lavished upon us in Christ.

Do you feel truly rich? Sadly, some of us still feel poor, as I did with a 100-dollar bill in front of a coffee machine. If we focus on immediate needs and wants, we fall into a

scarcity mindset even with God's showers of blessing: "God, I don't need redemption or eternal life right now, but a better job and marriage!"

But listen—the greatest poverty is not having less money. The greatest poverty is living as if God has not already lavished His grace on you.

If you want to enjoy the riches of God's grace, here is one thing you can do, based on 2 Co 9:8: "And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work." Some may say, "After I receive God's grace abundantly, I will do every good work." No! God has already lavished His grace upon us. Therefore, we are to abound in every good work.

So pour out God's abundant grace upon others, that he has lavished on you. Do not hold on to God's forgiveness like an unmerciful servant, but forgive others generously. The more you give and forgive, the more richly you experience God's showers of blessing.

Fourth, God's grace of Reconciliation (unity)

Now let's read verses 8b–10: "... in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth in him." In these verses, the mystery of God's will is to unite all things in Christ. This mystery is made known to us in Christ. Paul calls it God's grace as well because God has shown us what He is doing—and He lets us participate in it.

In verses 11–14, Paul reveals that God called the Jews as the first to hope in Christ, and God is calling the Gentiles as they hear the gospel and believe in Jesus. He witnesses God uniting both in Christ and into the church.

God also called Paul to do God's work of reconciliation. He shared God's gospel of reconciliation so sinners can be reconciled to God through Jesus, and to one another through Jesus into the church.

Here is the big picture of what God is doing and will accomplish. When all things are united in Christ and subjected to Christ, what will Christ do? Paul says in 1 Co 15:28: "When all things are subjected to him, then the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all." God may be all in you and me! God may be all in all. This is God's ultimate will: unity through reconciliation. We are also called to participate in His work, the ministry of reconciliation.

So if we hold bitterness, division, jealousy, or pride—how can we claim to understand God’s will? If God is uniting all things in Christ, then may we eagerly pursue unity in Christ.

Fifth, God’s grace of Inheritance

In verses 11–14, Paul tells us what in Christ “we” and “you” have obtained: an inheritance (11,14). An inheritance is not something we earn; we receive it from God our Father, as his children. As we join together in our Father’s work and finish our race by faith, our good, generous, gracious Father will give an inheritance to us in Christ. Our inheritance is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for us in Christ.

So let’s not live only for what perishes. Let’s live and join in our God’s work wholeheartedly and generously looking forward to our eternal inheritance!

Sixth, God’s grace of the Holy Spirit

Though we are in Christ, we still have weaknesses and flaws. We easily give in to sin and Satan’s temptations. Can we make it all the way to heaven? Let’s read verses 13–14: “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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.” Out of His glorious grace, He has sealed us in Christ with the promised Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee and deposit from God for our journey to heaven and for our inheritance.

So when you feel weak, remember: you are not holding on to God by your strength. God is holding on to you by His Spirit.

So as we have taken in the scope of God’s grace, we can conclude that God’s grace covers from eternity to eternity. God’s grace covers every spiritual blessing to us in Christ:

He chose us in Christ.
He adopted us as sons.
He redeemed us through His blood.
He revealed His plan to unite all things in Christ.
He promised us an inheritance.
And He sealed us with the Holy Spirit.

So what is left for us to do? We shouldn’t worry, or beg, or live like spiritual paupers.

Rather, let's stand on the mountain of God's grace, and shout in worship with Apostle Paul: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! To the praise of his glorious grace! To the praise of his glory!"

May the Holy Spirit open our spiritual eyes to see every spiritual blessing and cash it out. May God enable us to guide people who are in depths of the poverty and needs of this world to the mount of God's lavish grace.