

EPHESIANS

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS



SUPPLEMENTAL VERSES

Romans 5:1-2

John 13: 1-10

1 John 1:9

Romans 8:1-2

Matt 20:28

1 Peter 1: 18-19

2 Cor 5:18-19

Psalms 103: 11-12

Micah 7:19

Romans 5:20

1 Cor 1: 18-25

1 Cor 2: 6-16

Philippians 2:9-11

2 Cor 1: 21-22

Dan 6:17

Matt 27: 65-66

REVIEW

Paul begins His letter to the Ephesians with a big long run on sentence. In the Greek it is 200 words with no punctuations.

It's almost like he is so excited, that he can't take a breath.

In His opening remarks, He is praising God for the Spiritual Blessings that we have in Christ.

The Ephesians were rich in material, worldly riches...Paul wants them to know how "rich" they are in Christ!

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS PAUL MENTIONS

Here are the blessings that we have in Christ that Paul mentions in verses 3 -14.

1. We are chosen
2. We are adopted
3. We are accepted
4. We have redemption
5. He has forgiven us
6. He has given us wisdom and understanding
7. He has sealed us
8. He has given us an inheritance

WE ARE CHOSEN AND ADOPTED

So far we have looked at and discussed two of these blessings.

You have been chosen: Before the foundation of the world, God chose you. He selected you. He picked you.

You have been adopted: He has adopted you into His family.

Some of the implications of our adoption into God's family: He is now our Father, and we have complete and full access to Him! Just like that daughter in Nigeria, we can burst into the throne room and jump on Daddy's lap. We have a new family name, a new identity, and sense of belonging. We have an inheritance. We are coheirs with Christ. As a loving Father, He watches over us, providing protection and security. And just like a Father raises his children...He brings us to spiritual maturity.

HIS GLORIOUS GRACE

Let's read Ephesians 1: 1-14.

Verse 6

To the praise of His glorious grace which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

The KJV, NASB, AMP all say: To the praise of his glory grace wherein he has made us accepted in the beloved.

What is Paul saying here?

God's glorious grace that he has freely given to us because of Christ, He has made us accepted in Him.

What is grace?

The unmerited favor of God. It is God's loving kindness that God showers upon us.

Paul calls it "Glorious"

WHY DOES GOD FREELY GIVE HIS GRACE?

Why does God shine His glorious grace upon us?

Because of what Christ did on the cross!

If we are in Christ, we are recipients of God's glorious, unmerited favor and loving kindness!

This loving kindness and unmerited favor also makes us "accepted"!

ACCEPTANCE

What does it mean that we are accepted?

It means to be received. God receives us because of Christ! If we are in Christ, we are received by the Father!

What is the opposite of acceptance? Rejection!

If we are in Christ, are acceptance is sure, we will not be rejected by the Father!

Is there anything more that I can do to be accepted or more acceptable to God?

No...once we are in Christ, we are completed and fully received by God!

Romans 5:1-2 Since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ...and it is this grace by which we stand.

WILL GOD STILL ACCEPT ME WHEN I BLOW IT?

Notice what Paul says in this verse in Romans, that “this grace in which we now stand”

Most of us understand that we are “saved” by grace through faith. He accepts us because of what Christ did on the cross.

But Paul reiterates...that it is that same grace by which we are to stand, walk, and live.

We are going to continue to sin. We are going to continue to blow it. Some ugly sin is going to continue rear its head in our lives and we are going to continue to struggle with sin. After this happens, we fall, we feel shame, we feel guilt, etc.

Many wonder, will God still accept me? Will he still receive me? Even now after what I have done?

ACCEPTANCE IS NOW OUR STANDING BEFORE GOD!

We are not only “saved” by grace...it is that “glorious grace” by which we stand, walk, and live!

We are accepted in Christ. This is now are standing before God!

There is nothing more that we can do to be more acceptable to God!

Our acceptance is founded solely upon the work of Jesus Christ on the cross!

“Until the Christian is absolutely sure of his/her standing with God, we won’t do much standing!” Miles Stanford

WHAT DO I DO WHEN I BLOW IT?

Before we discuss this...let's ask the question...what does Satan want you to do when you blow it?

He wants you to remain in guilt, shame, condemnation, and feel like you are no good and that God doesn't want to have anything to do with you anymore, or won't use you anymore.

Satan's primary objective is to keep you from coming to faith in Christ. After we come to faith...Satan next objective is to keep us "ineffective" in our walk with Christ! How does he do this? Through sin in our lives and how we handle it!

Satan wants to make us now question our acceptance before God!

He wants to paralyze us and keep us in a downward spiral of guilt, shame, condemnation, and fear that God will not accept us back!

UNDERSTANDING OUR “STANDING”

Let's look at **John 13: 1-10**. This is a familiar passage, but in it Jesus says something really profound and amazing.

“Unless I wash you , you have no part with me.”

“Those who have had a bath, need only to wash their feet, their whole body is already clean. And you are clean!”

If you are in Christ, you are “cleansed”...you are accepted...this is your standing.

But...you do need to wash your feet!

DAILY CONFESSION/REPENTANCE

Those who had a bath...need only to wash their feet.

God knows that we are walking around in the world and that we are going to get “dirty” so to speak. We are going to sin.

When we do sin, how we handle it is crucial!

Not sitting in it, not being paralyzed by it, not continuing in it, not denying it, not blaming. Not letting guilt and shame paralyze us or keep us from coming to God.

We need to come to the cross every single day...and wash our feet! Confessing our sin, repenting, and receiving God’s grace and mercy!

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive and cleanse.

Romans 8: 1-2 There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

REDEMPTION

Verse 7, Paul continues on, He says “In him we have redemption through his blood”

What is redemption?

Redemption = Buy back, release affected by a payment of ransom.

In the Roman Empire there were over 60 million slaves according to one commentator. Slaves were bought & sold like pieces of furniture.

The idea here that Paul is conjuring up is a picture of slavery.

God purchased us out of the “slavery of sin”.

What was the price for purchasing us? The blood shed on the cross!

Matt 20:28 The Son of God came to give his life as a ransom. A payment!

CHRIST'S BLOOD (PAYMENT) WAS FORESHADOWED IN THE PASSOVER

1 Peter 1: 18-19 It wasn't with silver or gold but with the precious blood of Christ that you were redeemed!

In the OT God's people were enslaved in Egypt. The Lord raised up Moses to go to Pharaoh and ask for their release. What happened? Pharaoh said no...so God sent 10 plagues on Egypt in order to convince Pharaoh to let the people go. What was the last plague? The killing of the first born child. God said to the people to put the blood of the lamb on the doorpost of their homes and the angel of the Lord would "Passover" the homes with the blood on the doorposts.

The blood of the Lamb was what "saved" them and allowed them to be released from slavery. This was foreshadowing what Christ would do on the cross!

In Christ, we have redemption...We have been bought back by God, from the slavery of sin and death. We are now His!

FORGIVENESS

Verse 7 (Continued)...Paul continues by saying, In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us.

We have redemption...we have been bought out of slavery by God...and we have forgiveness.

What is forgiveness?

Forgiveness = Let go, to pardon, to release, to not hold something against someone.

FORGIVENESS IS A DECISION!

Many people are confused with the idea of forgiveness.

They think that forgiveness is a feeling...that they need to “feel” like forgiving someone. I will forgive when I “feel” like it.

Notice...this is not the Biblical definition of forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a decision! It is a decision that God has made not to hold our sins against us! God has decided to let go, not count our sins against us.

2 Cor 5:18-19. Not counting men’s sins against them.

Psalms 103: 11&12. As High as the heavens are from earth he has removed our transgressions.

Micah 7:19 says that he “hurls all our iniquities into the depths of the sea!”

IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE

Paul says that God's gives us forgiveness...he makes a decision to let go of our sins and not count them against us...How???

In accordance with the riches of His grace!

God showers us with His grace and mercy and His love! We are rich in it because of Christ!

How rich is his grace and mercy?

Romans 5:20 when sin increased, grace increased all the more.

We cannot "out sin" God's grace. There is more than enough grace to cover all of our sin!

That's why we sing "Amazing Grace!" His grace is so amazing! It is "glorious grace"!

WHAT IS WISDOM AND UNDERSTANDING?

Verse 8-9 says “he has lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding...and He has made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure.

What is wisdom and understanding?

Understanding = insight or knowledge.

Knowledge is gathered over time through study or teaching.

Wisdom = application of knowledge. How one acts upon knowledge.

Ex. Knowledge understands that the traffic light is red...wisdom applies the brakes.

Knowledge understands and sees quicksand...wisdom walks around it.

VIEW OF WISDOM DURING THAT TIME PERIOD

Wisdom was a very coveted thing!

Greek word for wisdom is “Sophia”. It is where we get the word “Philosophy.”

There is a statue of Athena, the Goddess of wisdom, the personification of wisdom, in the Celsus Library in Ephesus.

Wisdom was a central idea in Hellenistic philosophy, Platonism, and Gnosticism.

The Greek culture prided themselves in their intellect, philosophies, and their quest for wisdom.

WISDOM COMES FROM GOD!

Many of these philosophers were on a life long quest to develop wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. They prided themselves in reading and exchanging ideas and pursuing wisdom.

Paul demolishes this idea of where wisdom comes from.

Paul says that wisdom comes from God! If you are “in Christ”...God has lavished on you all wisdom and understanding.

How do you think this idea was received in this culture?

This is a radical idea to the Ephesians. They believed that you had to strive, to work, and pursue wisdom.

HOW DOES GOD GIVE US WISDOM?

Paul says that God has lavished on us his grace with all wisdom and understanding making known to us the mystery of His will.

How does God give us wisdom?

When we are saved, God places His Holy Spirit inside of us! One of the ministries of the Holy Spirit is to help us understand God, His will, spiritual truths and to be wise regarding Spiritual things!

WISDOM FROM GOD

Let's read a couple passages that Paul writes concerning this issue: **1 Cor 1: 18 – 25**

1 Cor 2: 6-16

Notice what Paul says in 1 Cor 2: 7 We speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.

2:10 But God has revealed it to us (this secret wisdom) by His Spirit

2:12 We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.

A NEW PAIR OF GLASSES?

What is Paul communicating?

When we come to Christ, we are saved, God places His Holy Spirit inside of us.

The Holy Spirit of God living inside of us changes the way we see things and the way that we think about things!!!

It's like we put on a new pair of glasses.

We now see the world differently , life differently, spiritual things differently.

Look at what he says in 1 Cor 2:14 The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from God, for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned.

People without God see the world differently, life differently...and spiritual things are not understandable to them...in fact...they are foolishness to them.

UNDERSTANDING GOD'S WILL

Paul goes on to say Ephesians 1: 9 he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure.

God gives us wisdom and understanding so that we can know the mystery of His will!

What is His will that he is referring to? 1: 10 to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

When we come to Christ, God lifts the veil that covered our hearts and our minds. We now can see Him more clearly...and understand spiritual things that we couldn't understand before...including God's will. Part of God's will is that all things in heaven and on earth are brought together under Christ.

Philippians 2:9 -11: that every knee will bow in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth and will proclaim that Jesus Christ is Lord to the Glory of God the Father

WE ARE THE PRAISE OF HIS GLORY

Ephesians 1:11 In him, we were also chosen having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory.

We discussed these ideas of being chosen and being predestined in week 2.

But notice the last part of this verse...that we might be for the praise of His glory.

What does Paul mean by that statement?

Pauls says that God saved you and I for a reason...that we might be for the praise of His glory!

When the angels, and the rest of creation... see you and I living as Christians and living transformed lives...They praise God and say "look what God did"! Look what he created, saved, and transformed! God specializes in making things new!! Look what He did with Marc!!! What a miracle!!!

He didn't just save us so that we wouldn't be in hell, He saved us so that we might be to the praise of His Glory!

HE SEALED US

Ephesians 1: 13 And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

Notice that we were marked...once we believed.

Once we believe in Christ, we are saved, and the Holy Spirit comes into our lives.

The Holy Spirit does many things in our lives...But one of the things he does is He seals us.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT WE ARE SEALED?

What does it mean that we are sealed?

The idea of sealing back in that day was to put an official marking on.

This official mark might be put on a letter, a contract, or another important document.

The seal was made of hot wax and then impressed with a signet ring. The document was thereby officially recognized, or identified with the person that the signet ring belonged to.

When Paul says that we are sealed by God...it is God stating that we are his. It is His seal of ownership that is placed on us spiritually.

2 Cor 1:21-22 Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put His Spirit in our hearts.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN THAT GOD OWNS US?

Spiritually...we have a God's seal/stamp on us.

It is a declaration to the spiritual world that you and I are His children and we cannot be touched.

We can't see exactly what that means in the spiritual world. But there are a few examples in scripture of the implications of sealing and what it meant.

Daniel 6:17 King Darius along with his nobles set his seal on the stone over the entrance of the door so that nothing might be changed in regard to Daniel. Any one who messed with that seal or stone would have to answer to the King.

Matt 27: 65-66 The Jewish Leaders asked Pilot to put a Roman seal on the stone where Jesus tomb was and to have it guarded with a Roman guard. Anyone who would mess with that seal...would have to answer to Roman authorities.

We are His! Nothing comes into our lives without going through Him first!

THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A DEPOSIT

What does it mean when Paul says the Holy Spirit is a “Deposit”?

The word deposit = means downpayment or pledge.

I am under contract right now to buy a warehouse. When I signed the contract, I had to give the seller a large sum of money to hold as a deposit.

What does a deposit signify? It signifies that you won't back out of the deal. You are pledging that you will go through with the deal or they get to keep your deposit.

Paul is saying that the Holy Spirit is “God's deposit” guaranteeing us that we will get an inheritance from God!

WE HAVE AN INHERITANCE

What does that inheritance look like?

We get to be in God's presence for all eternity. **1 Thes 4: 13-18** We will be with Him forever! **John 14: 1-3** I am going to prepare a place for you...so that you can be with me where I am.

We will get a new body, "a spiritual body" like Christ did. **1 Cor 15:42-56** The perishable shall put on imperishable

We will inherit His kingdom!. **Mathew 25: 34** Come, take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

We will be ruling and reigning with Christ! **Rev 20: 6** they will be priests of God and Christ and will reign with Him

THIS IS WHY PAUL IS PRAISING GOD!

Paul is praising God for the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ!

He wants us to know that we are “rich” spiritually!

He has chosen us, he has adopted us as his sons and daughters, he has accepted us, redeemed us, forgiven us...He has given us wisdom and understanding...He has sealed us with His Holy Spirit declaring that we are HIS... and He has given us an inheritance that will not perish, spoil or fade! We will be with Him forever, we will get a new body...a spiritual one, we will be apart of His heavenly kingdom, and we will rule and reign with Christ. His Holy Spirit is a deposit which declares that inheritance is real and will be given to us!

Praise be to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ! AMEN!