

Second Baptist Church of Doylestown

Wed. Eve. Bible Study - 6/1/16

Letter To The Ephesians

Spiritual Blessings In Christ

Scripture Lesson: Ephesians I: 1 - 14

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Praise for Spiritual Blessings in Christ

³ Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, ⁹ he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. 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, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.

The apostle Paul spent three years in Ephesus (Acts 19; and 20: 17-38), and as a result of his ministry a church was established in that city. Ten years later, from his prison in Rome, Paul wrote this Epistle and sent it by Tychicus to the Christians there. Ephesians is a thrilling book because it tells us how we (or anyone) can become a Christian and how God wants us to live the Christian life. Chapters 1 - 3 tell us of our *Wealth in Christ*, and chapters 4 - 6 tell us of our *Walk in Christ*.

The Key Verse to the first three chapters is 1: 3, which introduces the theme of this first study. In the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ, God has made over to the believer His whole estate of spiritual wealth. Without Christ, and apart from Him, we have nothing, we are nothing and we can do nothing (John 15: 5); but, as believers, God says to us - Luke 15: 31. How rich we are - yet how few of us realize our true wealth and "possess our inheritance" (Obadiah 17)! God has made His Son the source of all spiritual blessing, and the moment we receive Him as Savior and Lord all the blessings which are in Him become ours.

What are these blessings which are ours in Christ and which we need to appropriate and enjoy? Verses 4 -14 mention seven.

1. We have been CHOSEN in Christ before the Foundation of the World (verse 4).

This is the great truth of Election. How wonderful that God should select us to be His very own! Notice when He chose us and why He chose us - compare John 15: 16 and 1 Pet. 1:15-16. What a marvel of sovereign grace this is! Our salvation was certainly no after-thought in the mind of God; the whole plan was conceived in eternity past. Believer, do you ever wonder whether after all you will be saved? Read and rest upon verse 4, cast away your doubts forever - and look up John 6: 37-39.

2. We have been PREDESTINED unto the Adoption of Children (verses 4 and 5).

This word "predestine" means "to mark out beforehand". In eternity God not only chose us but He planned what He would do with us. Election looks backward and tells us we were chosen (verse 4); predestination looks forward and tells us why we were chosen (verse 5). God's purpose in choosing us is that we should be brought into His family and given the full status and privileges of sonship. Think of it - we who were lost and enemies have been chosen to be sons, members of the Royal Family of Heaven! - look up 1 John 3: 1-3, and compare Romans 8: 18, 19 and 23.

3. We have been ACCEPTED in the Beloved (verse 6).

This means that whereas God could never accept us in our sinful, unregenerate condition, yet once we trust Christ as our Savior He does accept us in Him - compare Isaiah 64: 6 with Ephesians 1: 6. This should banish all my doubts. If I look at my sinful self I doubt at once, but if I fix my eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12: 2), in whom I am accepted, my doubts vanish, because God has accepted the perfect life and the finished work of His Son, and it is in Him that I find my acceptance.

4. We have been REDEEMED and all our sins have been forgiven (verse 7).

To redeem is to buy back, to release by ransom - look up 1 Peter 1: 18-19. We were "sold as a slave to sin" (Romans 7: 14), and we have been "bought at a price" (1 Corinthians 6: 20); and not only this, we have been forgiven - look up Isaiah 44: 22-23; Psalm 103: 12 and Luke 7: 47. God has not only made us His own, but He has made

us fit to live with Him for ever. How has He done this? - "by His blood"; that is, by the sacrifice and atoning work of the Lord Jesus - look up Matthew 20: 28, and compare 2 Corinthians 5: 21 with Hebrews 9: 12; 1 Peter 1: 18 and 2: 24 and Revelation 1: 5-6.

5. We have been INITIATED into the Divine Mystery (verses 8 to 10).

This word "mystery" refers to truth which was once undisclosed but which God has now revealed. The particular "disclosure" referred to in verse 10 is that everything is moving towards the glorious consummation of all things, when Philippians 2: 10-11 will be a reality. Where has God made known unto us the mystery of His will (verse 9)? In His Word, which is "the word of the prophets made more certain" (2 Peter 1: 19). There we have God's glorious plan for the future, until time is no more and the saved are with Him for all eternity.

6. We have obtained an INHERITANCE (verse 11).

In Christ we have everything we need for time and for eternity (verse 11) - look up 1 Peter 1: 4, and compare Romans 8: 17 and 32; 1 Corinthians 3: 21-23; 2 Timothy 2: 12 and Revelation 5: 10. Inheritance speaks of riches, wealth, possessions - and how rich we are in Him! Verse 14 tells us that we already have the guarantee of our inheritance. The Holy Spirit within us is the pledge that one day we shall enter into all that which already belongs to us in Christ - look up Ephesians 4: 30 and compare John 14: 16-17.

7. We have been SEALED with the Holy Spirit of Promise (verses 13 and 14).

This divine sealing denotes ownership and security; we belong to Him and we shall always belong to Him! - we have been sealed "unto the journey's end" (Ephesians 4: 30).

These spiritual blessings belong to every Christian. They are only ours if we are "in Christ" (verse 3); if, having heard the gospel (verse 13), we have believed (verse 13).