

Blessed and Sealed Ephesians 1:7-14 (ESV) bible-sermons.org October 30, 2011

Last week we saw some of the reasons for which we should praise the Father. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ in the heavenly realms. He chose us in Christ before He made the world. He chose to make us holy and blameless in Christ. He predestined us to be adopted as His sons, making us the brothers of Jesus and that is the term Paul used in Romans 8. (Romans 8:29) We baulk at these magnanimous statements as if they were too good to possibly be true. But when we look at the love and power of the Father and the willingness of the Son to make it so, we bow in adoration that He could have such a wonderful plan for us who believe. Please be sure you understand to the best of your ability this incredible graciousness of God the Father to all who will believe. (John 1:12)

Verse 6 reminds us that all this that has been done for us is *to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved*. And now the theme moves from praise to the Father for what He has done for us to the blessings in the Son. I now have available copies of the new book *Divine Messiah?*. It shows in every chapter of Matthew that the disciples understood that oneness of the Father and Son. Paul certainly understood it as well as it is possible for man to understand. (Romans 9:5) Here in the beginning of Ephesians we have the wonder of the Trinity expressed in praise to the Father for His plan, blessings in the Son who performed the plan, and guarantee of the Spirit to complete the plan.

In verse 7 Paul moves to the blessing we have in the Beloved, the Son, which are the reasons we should praise the Son. *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*, In Jesus we have redemption. That means that the debt we owed was paid. Ravi Zacharius described our condition well. "Sin is one of the most empirically verifiable realities of our existence, but at the same time the most vehemently denied." Man does not want to admit he has lived in defiance to God, in selfishness and egotism. We might be willing to say it is true of certain individuals, but not of mankind, for we are included in mankind. (Romans 3:10) We desperately want to think more highly of ourselves. Yet when we honestly and carefully examine our actions and motives, we find that we are no different from those we would accuse. It is so very difficult for us to accept that we are sinners, for then we would find we are indebted to a just and holy God and in need of redemption.

We are like the man in the parable who was to be imprisoned for the great debt he could not pay. (Matthew 18:34) But Christ came and paid the debt with His own blood. No amount of money could have paid for our sin debt. Rebellion against the King of the

Commented [Paul1]: Romans 8:29 (NIV)
²⁹For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers.

Commented [Paul2]: John 1:12 (NIV)
¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--

Commented [Paul3]: Romans 9:5 (ESV)
⁵To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.

Commented [Paul4]: Romans 3:10 (NIV)
¹⁰As it is written: "There is no one righteous, not even one;

Commented [Paul5]: Matthew 18:34 (NIV)
³⁴In anger his master turned him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

universe is only payable with life. (Genesis 2:17) Jesus gave His own life so that our trespasses could be forgiven and we could be freed. No other blood would do, for every other person had their own sin debt. (Matthew 26:28)

Commented [Paul6]: Genesis 2:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.

Commented [Paul7]: Matthew 26:28 (ESV)

²⁸ for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.

We read of God's glorious grace by which we were adopted in verses 5 and 6. Now we read that this payment of blood that redeemed us was according to the riches of God's glorious grace. (Romans 5:8) The glorious grace of God sent the Son and the riches of the grace of the Son moved Him to pay our debt. (Revelation 5:9)

Commented [Paul8]: Romans 5:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ For one will scarcely die for a righteous person—though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die

⁸ but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Commented [Paul9]: Revelation 5:9 (ESV)

⁹ And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation,

Paul goes on to describe that that grace was *lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding*. If you sinned once in your life you would not need lavish amounts of grace. If you could count your sins you would not need lavish amounts of grace. But since our sins are innumerable, we need grace to be lavished on us. We have amassed a debt that makes the U.S. debt look like chump change. **Only One had the riches to pay it, and He paid it lavishly!** (Romans 5:20)

Commented [Paul10]: Romans 5:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, grace abounded all the more,

The redemption Jesus gives us comes with wisdom and understanding. The English sounds like it is the attributes God applied in redeeming us, but it is actually a part of the redemption we receive. Our redemption comes with wisdom to discern the things of God and understanding in how to apply that wisdom.

As God reveals to your heart the greatness of His gift and the depravity of your sin, you will love Him greatly! The one who is forgiven much loves much, and **He is after your love.** (Luke 7:47)

Commented [Paul11]: Luke 7:47 (ESV)

⁴⁷ Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little.

Have you noticed that some people respond to grace by expecting more grace, presuming it to be their right, (ex: Samson) while others are broken hearted and gratefully express love for the grace given (ex: David)? My guess is that God knows that in time, those He has predestined are of the later sort. Thus, He lavishes His grace on them along with all wisdom and understanding. It is all His work. We simply do not refuse that work He is doing in us. No credit is due us. It is all of God. It is even by His grace we did not resist Him. He knocks on the door of every heart. (Revelation 3:20) We simply choose to open the door and grace comes pouring in in lavish abundance.

Commented [Paul12]: Revelation 3:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me.

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. That lavish grace also helps us to see the mystery of His will. The ancients knew there was a cosmic battle going on. They had the promise that the Tempter's head would be crushed (Genesis 3:15) and that the world would be blessed through the seed of Abraham. They had hints that this coming one would be called Mighty God, Everlasting Father (Isaiah 9:6), and yet be born of a virgin in

Commented [Paul13]: Genesis 3:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.

Commented [Paul14]: Isaiah 9:6 (ESV)

⁶ For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

Bethlehem (Micah 5:2). The mystery that they could not have imagined is that He would suffer and die in our place and pour out such great grace on Jew and Gentile that believe in His name. It's not that it isn't there in the Scripture's promises, but rather that **it is such a magnanimous gift and so all-encompassing that the mind could not imagine that could be the case.** If one were to catch a glimpse of it, they would dismiss it as too lofty a thought to entertain. (Ephesians 3:20)

When Abraham answered Isaac's question of where was the lamb for the sacrifice, who could have imagined that Abraham's answer of God providing Himself, the Lamb, would mean Christ in God is the Lamb that would be the ultimate sacrifice? (Genesis 22:8) Only looking back can we see the wonder hidden in the expressions of old.

God's purpose is to unite everything under Christ. The unity and peace we desire with one another and all creation is only possible in Christ when all things are made new. The old must pass away. (2Corinthians 5:17) Idealists desperately search for it here now, but it is only to be glimpsed in the relationship of those who walk in the Spirit.

There have been those who thought to find it in primitive cultures that are in tune with the land, only to find that the fallenness of man pervades every culture. (Romans 3:23) We dream of finding some lost paradise, but it is only to be found in the fullness of time when all things are united under Christ. (Romans 8:20-21)

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, Once we become sons, being adopted into the family of God, we have an inheritance. In Christ, we have obtained an inheritance. This is different from the NIV translation that says that "in Christ we were chosen". In this case I believe the ESV more closely follows the Greek. What inheritance did we obtain in Christ? EVERYTHING!

Let's read how Paul expressed it in 1Corinthians 3:21b-23(ESV). *^{21b} ... For all things are yours, ²² whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, ²³ and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.*

Inheritances can be a wonderful blessing. Sometimes they are simply sentimental things you value. Sometimes it can be wealth. It is an unearned blessing waiting for you laid up by someone who loves you. In this case the One that loves you is Christ. He died so you could receive the inheritance, eternal life, glory, adoption, and all good things.

Have you ever heard someone say they wish that they had an unknown uncle that died and left them a fortune? You have something infinitely better. You have a known Savior

Commented [Paul15]: Micah 5:2 (ESV)

² But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.

Commented [Paul16]: Ephesians 3:20 (ESV)

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,

Commented [Paul17]: Genesis 22:8 (ESV)

⁸ Abraham said, "God will provide for himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son. ESo they went both of them together.

Commented [Paul18]: 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

Commented [Paul19]: Romans 3:23 (ESV)

²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

Commented [Paul20]: Romans 8:20-21 (ESV)

²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope
²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God.

who loves you and died so you could inherit all things! Thank the Father that the Son conquered death because all things you inherit are in the Son! (Hebrews 1:2-3) Without the Son nothing else would be of any value.

We covered the predestined part of this verse when we looked at verse 5 last week. Here we see that we are predestined according to the purpose of Him who works out everything according to the counsel of His will. It's all about Him. That's because He is goodness, righteousness and truth. (Exodus 33:19) If it was about us we'd all be very concerned, because until He finishes the work in us, there is so much in our character that could go completely wrong. But in Christ, there is only that which is good. We will ever be thankful that it is all about Him. When we are perfected we'll want nothing less. (Romans 11:36)

God through Christ saved us, and adopted us as sons, giving us an inheritance 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.* The plan of God was that those apostles and early Christians that first placed their hope in Christ would bring praise to His glory. Remember that His glory is the outshining of His attributes which He shares with His Father. The apostles demonstrated the grace, compassion, goodness, love, holiness, justice and righteousness of God!

This is one of the reasons that the New Testament includes the stories of how the Spirit moved in the Apostles' lives, because we see the attributes of Jesus in their actions and words. (Acts 1:8) When we read it, we are moved by the Spirit to praise the glory of the Father and Son.

But it's not just those first believers who are moved by the Holy Spirit. 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,* There is a lot of discussion in Christian circles about who has the Spirit of God. Who is baptized in the Spirit? Who is sanctified? Those who believe are! (1Corinthians 6:11) When you receive Jesus by grace through faith, when you believe in Him, you are sealed by the Spirit. You have the Holy Spirit residing in you. The Spirit may not have all of you, but you have all of the Spirit. (2Corinthians 1:22) He doesn't come in pieces. You may experience a time in your walk when you surrender completely and walk in the fullness of the Spirit. That is not because you didn't have all of Him, but that you haven't given Him all of you. Baptized is to be immersed in something. If you want the baptism of the Spirit, surrender all of yourself to Jesus. Let Him be the Lord of every area of your life. He will fill every surrendered part that you give to Him. (Luke 11:13)

Commented [Paul21]: Hebrews 1:2-3 (ESV)

² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

³ He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.

Commented [Paul22]: Ephesians 1:5 (ESV)

⁵ he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

Commented [Paul23]: Exodus 33:19 (ESV)

¹⁹ And he said, "I will make all my goodness pass before you and will proclaim before you my name 'The LORD.' And I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and will show mercy on whom I will show mercy.

Commented [Paul24]: Romans 11:36 (ESV)

³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Commented [Paul25]: Acts 1:7-8 (ESV)

⁷ He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons that the Father has fixed by his own authority.

⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

Commented [Paul26]: 1 Corinthians 6:11 (ESV)

¹¹ And such were some of you. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

Commented [Paul27]: 2 Corinthians 1:22 (ESV)

²² and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.

Commented [Paul28]: Luke 11:13 (ESV)

¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!

We are sealed. It's a done deal. Like the tomb was sealed by the Roman guards to keep everyone out and Jesus in (Matthew 27:66), a much greater authority sealed Satan out of your spirit and Jesus in, only this seal is the promised Holy Spirit. He is a sure seal. He is the promised One in the sense that the prophets foretold of a day in which the Spirit would be poured out on all flesh, not just upon a few prophets and priests or kings and not just for a short time. (Joel 2:28-29) Those times when you find sudden courage and joy when according to circumstances you normally would not, you are experiencing the deposit. When the words come welling up from deep within and you know they are bypassing your brain to speak right to a person's soul, you are experiencing the deposit. When you are hungry for the Word or just want to get lost in a song of praise... yep – that is the sign you are sealed.

And He ¹⁴ *(who) is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.* When you experience the fruits of the Spirit you are tasting the down payment, the security deposit, of what you will one day experience to the full. And this too is to the praise of His glory. You see, when the Spirit of God lives and works through you, you too express the attributes of God and people see Jesus' life in you, in the same way that they saw it in the first believers. It is the same Holy Spirit at work expressing God's glory.

But remember this is just a guarantee of the fullness to come. What restricts the fullness now is our physical limitations, these fallen bodies. (Galatians 5:17) On that day nothing will hinder the Spirit from expressing all His fullness in us! (Philippians 3:21)

What an amazing God with such a wonderful plan for us who will accept this great gift He offers. We truly have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus. What more could we ask? Sometimes we get confused with glitter of the things of this world, but if we realize all that we have in Jesus, the world will fade in insignificance. Do you realize all that you have and all you will inherit in Him?

It is said that if something sounds too good to be true, it probably isn't true. This is the great exception! This promise of what God has done for us and has planned for us is confirmed by the Holy Spirit at work in us. It's ok to dream about this hope. In fact, I'd encourage you to think about it often. We'll close with more of Paul's thoughts on this from his letter to the Romans.

^{23b} *...we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.* ²⁴ *For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees?* ²⁵ *But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.* Romans 8:23b-25 (ESV)

Commented [Paul29]: Matthew 27:66 (ESV)

⁶⁶ So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

Commented [Paul30]: Joel 2:28-29 (ESV)

²⁸ "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions. ²⁹ Even on the male and female servants in those days I will pour out my Spirit.

Commented [Paul31]: Galatians 5:17 (ESV)

¹⁷ For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do.

Commented [Paul32]: Philippians 3:21 (ESV)

²¹ who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Praise the Father for His gracious plan! Adore the Son for carrying it through to completion! Yield to the Spirit who is the seal that guarantees our inheritance!

Questions

- 1 List the three themes in this long sentence.
- 2 How are we redeemed?
- 3 Why did Paul use the word "lavished"?
- 4 What was the great mystery?
- 5 What is the believers' inheritance?
- 6 Who died so you could receive it?
- 7 Why should it all be about Jesus?
- 8 Where do we see the glory of God?
- 9 What does the seal of the Holy Spirit guarantee?
- 10 All this goodness is to what end?