

## “Spiritual Blessings – Part II”

May 19, 2024

Ephesians 1:3-14

### I. Introduction

The thought or motto “*What’s in it for me?*” has been around since the beginning of time—beginning with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. This has morphed into the prideful “*It’s all about me*” which has led to the majority of sin throughout the ages. It is so typical for each individual, each country, even this planet to look at themselves as the center of everything. But when one truly looks at one’s significance in the big picture; at our place in a seemingly infinite universe, we are reminded of how insignificant we really are. The trouble is that even when we discover our lack of significance, we soon forget what we have learned and fall back into the same old pride-filled habits.

Sadly, Christians are plagued by the same philosophy. We are just as quick to say, “*I can do it myself!*” like everyone else. Paul’s letter to Christians in Ephesus and surrounding cities in his day, as well as to Christians today, reminds all Christians that it isn’t about us—life is about bringing praise and glory to God. Because God has extended His grace and mercy to mankind, He freely offers all He possesses to the world, beginning with eternal life through the life and death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ, He deserves praise and glory.

Last week we saw some of the blessings we have from God the Father from “before the creation of the world.” *First, God chose us before time began.* Our salvation is dependent on God’s grace and not on anything we have done. (We also saw that in God’s economy—God’s thinking—both His sovereign will and man’s free will exist and are equally important.) *Second, God adopted us.* Before the beginning of time, God predetermined—decided beforehand—to adopt those who would make Jesus Christ their Lord and Savior and, through adoption, give them a joint heir relationship with Jesus Christ.

Today we will finish this doxology from Paul as we consider the blessings from God the Son in the past and the blessings from God the Holy Spirit in the present and for the future.

## II. Blessings from God the Son

**A. He has redeemed us.** First, “in him we have redemption through His blood.” In Paul’s day, there were around 60 million slaves in the Roman Empire. Often, they were bought and sold like pieces of furniture. But a man could buy a slave and set him free. To redeem means “*to purchase and set free by paying a price.*” This is what Jesus did for us; He has redeemed us. **Turn to 1 Peter 1:18-21.**

The price of our redemption was Jesus’ own blood. **Hebrews 9:22** says, “In fact, the law requires that nearly everything be cleansed with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.” **Romans 6** says that we have been redeemed or freed from slavery to sin. As a Christian you are no longer a slave, you are a son, a daughter of God. **Colossians 1:13-14** says, “For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” **Turn to Romans 8:1-2.** If we were slaves, we would be poor, but as children of God, Christians have been set free from the law, the tyranny of sin and death—we are rich. Jesus paid for your redemption with His blood—His life.

**B. He has forgiven us.** One result of redemption for the believer is forgiveness. As Jesus shared the cup at the Last Supper, He said in **Matthew 26:28**, “This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.” Redemption brings forgiveness; He has forgiven us.

God is holy, righteous, and just. God’s justice is based on the fact that the penalty has been carried out; the price has been paid. God paid the penalty Himself and then He forgave the offender. God paid the penalty through Jesus’ blood. He can forgive sins because He paid the penalty for those sins—your sins.

Israel’s greatest holy day was Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. On that day, the high priest selected two unblemished sacrificial goats. One goat was killed, and its blood was sprinkled on the altar as a sacrifice. The high priest then placed his hands on the head of the other goat, symbolically laying the sins of the people on that animal. The goat was then taken out deep into the wilderness, so far that it wouldn’t be able find its way back. In symbolism, the sins of the people went with the goat, never to

return to them again. Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus Christ, like the scapegoat of **Leviticus 16**, took the sins of the world on His own head and carried them an infinite distance away so that they can never return. No written accusation can stand against us, our sins are gone. As **Psalms 103:12** says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.” It’s as if those sins never existed!

There are no second-class citizens, no deprived children in God’s family. Every sin of every believer is forgiven forever. God knows how we were, how we now live, and how we will live the rest of our lives. He sees and knows everything about us—our past, our present, and our future; nothing is hidden. But God in His mercy and love is generous. Paul wrote that “**forgiveness of sins**” is not only given “**in accordance with the riches of God’s grace**” but is “**lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.**” Our sins will never exceed God’s amazing grace and gracious forgiveness; as **Romans 5:20** says, “**Where sin increased, grace increased all the more.**”

**C. He has revealed God’s will to us.** Paul wrote that “**he made known to us the mystery of his will.**” A mystery in Scripture isn’t something one wonders about. A mystery in Scripture means that God is revealing something that, up to that point in time, He had not revealed. As His children, believers are part of God’s inner circle. We are able to share in the secret that God will one day unite everything in Christ. He has revealed God’s will to us.

Ever since sin came into the world, things have been falling apart. This is the result of sin. Science calls it *entropy*. But in Christ, God will gather everything together at the right time, at the end of the ages. At that time **Philippians 2:10-11** says that “**at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**” As the Messiah, the Christ, Jesus will gather the entire universe together into unity. Satan will be cast into the bottomless pit (**Revelation 20:3, 10**) and as **Revelation 19:15** says, “**He, i.e., Jesus, will rule the nations with an iron scepter.**”

Later, after 1000 years ([Revelation 20:7](#)), every trace of evil and sin will be removed; God will establish a perfect new heaven and new earth. As the Apostle John wrote in [Revelation 21:1](#), “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.” This is God’s unchangeable goal for the universe, His mystery—there will be perfection once again.

**D. Finally, He has given us an inheritance.** Back in Ephesians 1, a better reading of [verse 11](#) is “in Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him, who works all things according to the counsel of His will.” In Christ, through His death and resurrection, we have a wonderful inheritance. It was determined before time began, i.e., it was predestined, that those who accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior would be heirs with Christ. [Turn 1 Peter 1:3-4. Rom. 8:17](#) says, “Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ.” [Ephesians 1:3](#) adds that our inheritance includes “every spiritual blessing in Christ.” [2 Peter 1:3-4](#) explains, “His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.” In Jesus Christ, believers inherit every promise God has ever made.

Paul closed this section by reminding the readers that they are redeemed for the purpose of demonstrating God’s grace and mercy and love to others. Or as [1 Peter 2:9](#) says, “You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.” Our salvation, including the accompanying eternal and boundless blessings, is designed to bring praise and glory to the Almighty God.

### **III. Blessings from the Holy Spirit**

**A. He seals us.** Paul wrote about God the Father’s actions before time began, Christ’s actions in the past, and then he wrote about the actions of the Holy Spirit in the present and future. First, the Holy Spirit seals us. But before Paul wrote about being sealed, he reminded the reader how the sinner becomes a saint. First, he hears the “the word of truth, the gospel of salvation.” This is the good news from

1 Corinthians 15:3-6 that Jesus Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again. When one believes this Gospel, it becomes “**your**” salvation. Having heard the Word of Truth, the Ephesians believed, and their faith brought salvation. In Ephesians 1:13, Paul said that “**having believed**” or when they believed, the Ephesians immediately received the Holy Spirit. The only way to salvation is through Jesus Christ. But there’s more, John 1:12 says, “**Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.**” One of those rights is the seal of the Holy Spirit. Every believer receives the Holy Spirit the moment he trusts in Christ. Romans 8:9 says, “**You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ.**”

This sealing of the Holy Spirit signifies several things. *First, it signifies security.* The Roman seal on Jesus’ tomb was a mark of security. No one was to move the stone; what was inside was safe and protected. Like the seal on Jesus’ tomb, the seal of the Holy Spirit on the believer secures and protects the believer. *Second, the seal signifies ownership.* God put His seal on us because He purchased us to be His own. Turn to 1 Cor. 6:19-20. Because the believer belongs to God, he is safe and protected by God. *Third, the seal signifies authenticity.* When God gives us His Holy Spirit, it is as if He stamps us with a seal that says, “*This person belongs to Me and is an authentic citizen of My divine kingdom and a member of My divine family.*” This is why Jesus said, “**By their fruit you will know them**” (Matt. 7:16). *Finally, the seal signifies authority.* When Christians are sealed with the Holy Spirit, they are authorized by God to proclaim, teach, minister, and defend God’s Word and His Gospel with the Lord’s own authority, i.e., to “**go and make disciples of all nations**” (Matthew 28:19).

**B. 2<sup>nd</sup>** Paul wrote that **He is our guarantee.** The Holy Spirit is God’s first installment as a guarantee to His children that He will finish His work and eventually bring them to glory. The Holy Spirit is God’s irreversible guarantee, down payment, or a divine engagement ring to the church that as Christ’s bride, she will never be neglected or forsaken. 2 Corinthians 1:22 says that God “**set His seal of ownership on us and put His Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.**”

## IV. Conclusion

2 Peter 3:9 reminds us, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.” In Acts 1:8 Jesus said, “You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” God wants everyone to be saved—this is His sovereign will. At the same time, everyone needs to make a choice to become a disciple or not—this is mankind’s free will. Faith is man’s response to God’s election. In election God gives His promises, and by faith men receive them. If you have accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior, all the blessings we have seen in these opening verses of Ephesians are yours. God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit have worked and are working on your behalf to bless you—to make you rich. As 1 Timothy 6:17 says, “God richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.” This includes eternal riches which make all other wealth worthless.

Only Jesus Christ has the natural right to all the goodness of God. But because we are identified with Christ in faith, that goodness is now also our goodness. These riches were planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, and presented by the Spirit. Because our Savior and Lord is the Beloved of the Father and possesses all the goodness of the Father, we are also the beloved of the Father and possess all His goodness. Jesus said in John 14:21, “Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father.”

God the Father chose you before time began to be His son or His daughter. God the Son, Jesus Christ, took on human form so that He could pay the penalty for your sins by dying on the cross. If you freely choose to make Jesus your Lord and Savior, God the Holy Spirit will immediately fill you. As well as bringing all of God’s blessings, He will make you a joint heir with Jesus Christ. No one deserves or can earn these spiritual riches; they can only be received by grace through faith.

You have all the riches of God at your command. Instead of trying to do things in your own strength, trust God and use His blessings to bring praise and glory to God. Borrowing a phrase from the Army: *Be All that You Can Be in the Power of God*