

J.J.

(Truth and Love)

SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS OF A CHRISTIAN
Ephesians 1:3-14

Ephesians 1:3 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.

Supporting Jenica on her Ministry call.

One of the things that we pray for in our Elders Prayer Meeting every Monday is that God will raise up a Joshua generation, a younger generation in DCF who will be committed followers of Jesus Christ. One of them today, by God's grace is Jenica and I'll let her speak to you about the ministry God is calling her to be involved with.

INTRODUCTION :

For the past 2 weeks, we have been talking about Spiritual blessings in Ephesians 1. Spiritual blessings is something we can't see but it is real. Just like God, even though we do not see Him, He is real.

The Bible describes Him as "Spirit"

John 4:24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

I love these conversations between two babies inside the womb (I adapted this from the author Pablo Molinero)

In a mother's womb were two babies. The first baby asked the other: "Do you believe in life after delivery?"

The second baby replied, "Why, of course. There has to be something after delivery. Maybe we are here to prepare ourselves for what we will be later."

"Nonsense," said the first. "There is no life after delivery. What would that life be?"

"I don't know, but there will be more light than here. Maybe we will walk with our legs and eat from our mouths."

The doubting baby laughed. "This is absurd! Walking is impossible. And eat with our mouths? Ridiculous. The umbilical cord supplies nutrition. Life after delivery is to be excluded. The umbilical cord is too short."

The second baby held his ground. "I think there is something and maybe it's different than it is here."

The first baby replied, “No one has ever come back from there. *Delivery is the end of life, and in the after-delivery it is nothing but darkness and anxiety and it takes us nowhere.*”

“Well, I don’t know,” said the twin, “but certainly we will see mother and she will take care of us.”

“Mother?” The first baby guffawed. “You believe in mother? Where is she now?”

The second baby calmly and patiently tried to explain. “She is all around us. It is in her that we live. Without her there would not be this world.”

“Ha. I don’t see her, so it’s only logical that she doesn’t exist.”

To which the other replied, “Sometimes when you’re in silence you can hear her, you can feel her.

It’s the same with God, He is real if you are just aware of it.

Genesis 28:16 When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he thought, “Surely the LORD is in this place, and I was not aware of it.”

It’s the same with Spiritual blessings, we do not see it... but it is real and what we’re doing is to become aware of it!

Review :

The letter of Paul to the Ephesians is what preachers call “the spiritual bank account” of the Christian. It shows the riches we have in Christ.

Let’s talk about what “spiritual blessings” mean.

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.

Spiritual blessings is opposite of physical blessings.

It’s simple. There is what you call physical blessings. It’s anything that you can see.

For example :

Wealth – money, car, house or Health – healthy body or a job... those are physical blessings.

Warning : Physical blessings are good

James 1:17 Every good and perfect gift is from above.

But I will not be joining my calling as a pastor if I do not warn you to be careful that it doesn’t become an idol. It’s because the Bible always warns that about it. We have a tendency to turn the physical blessings that we have as an idol. **When does it become an idol? When you put your trust and faith in it instead of God.**

Example : Your job which is a blessing can turn into an idol. Your spouse, your children,... can turn into an idol. Your health, your skills and etc.

BIBLICAL ILLUSTRATION : You know the story of The Golden Calf. Moses was face to face with God in Mount Sinai and the people didn’t know what was happening. They were in the middle of the desert and look what happened.

Exodus 32: 1 When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, “Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don’t know what has happened to him.”

2 Aaron answered them, “**Take off the gold earrings that your wives, your sons and your daughters are wearing, and bring them to me.**” 3 So all the people took off their earrings and brought them to Aaron. 4 He took what they handed him and made it into an idol cast in the shape of a calf, fashioning it with a tool. Then they said, “These are your gods, Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt.”

Question: Remember, they were slaves and they were in the desert for 40 years. Where did they get the gold?

Remember, because all the first born in Egypt died, **Pharaoh asked Moses to leave Egypt and even the Egyptians urged the people to hurry and leave.** But look at what happened.

Exodus 12: 35 The Israelites did as Moses instructed and asked the Egyptians for articles of silver and gold and for clothing. 36 The Lord had made the Egyptians favorably disposed toward the people, and they gave them what they asked for; so they plundered the Egyptians.

So please remember, when God has given us the blessing, don’t turn it into an idol. How? Focus on the spiritual blessings God has given us.

Etymology: spiritual “pneumatikos” where we get the word “pneuma” – which means “breath”.

2 Corinthians 4:18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Now let’s look at the second component. The word “blessing”.

ETYMOLOGY: Blessed (praise), blessed, blessing is translated in just one Greek word “eu- logia” meaning “a good word”
That’s where we get the word “eulogy”

That’s why KJV or ESV version translated it this way.

Ephesians 1: 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, (KJV)

What does this mean that blessing here means “good word”? IT MEANS THE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS THAT WE HAVE ARE FOR SURE AND WILL NOT BE ABLE TO BE TAKEN AWAY FROM US.

First, it is GOD WHO SAID IT!

3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed (HAS GIVEN US HIS “GOOD WORD” us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

This is the reason why these spiritual blessings are for sure BECAUSE GOD GAVE HIS GOOD WORD!

Second, GOD SECURED IT.

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.

Now the question is, HOW DID WE GET THE SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS?

*Ephesians 1:3 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**.*

That's why the whole passage...all the spiritual blessings, Paul emphasized that is because only IN CHRIST! This means THESE BLESSINGS ARE ONLY FOR CHRISTIANS... TO THOSE WHO BELIEVE THAT JESUS CHRIST IS LORD AND SAVIOUR ALONE!

This is what you call GRACE.

And we mentioned what does G-R-A-C-E mean?
God's Riches At Christ's Expense.

What are the Spiritual blessings that we have IN CHRIST?

Remember, all these spiritual blessings can never be taken away from us.

ELECTION, ADOPTION, REDEMPTION, REVELATION, POSSESSION

I. ELECTION

4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Remember, brothers and sisters, we were CHOSEN BY GOD!

When did He choose us?

*4 For he chose us in him **before the creation of the world** to be holy and blameless in his sight.*

II. ADOPTION

In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—

Brothers and sisters! What a blessing! That we are called God's children!!!

Again, reminder, NOT EVERYONE is called a child of God.

John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

The question is, what was the motivation that God chose us to be His children?

*In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship **through Jesus Christ**, in accordance with his pleasure and will—*

AGAPE is “I love you because I CHOOSE TO” – it means even if you’re not loveable, even if you’ve hurt me or offended me, I choose to love you.

That's what God did.

1 John 3:1 The Father has loved (agape) us so much that we are called children of God. And we really are his children. (NCV)

You might ask : That's the motivation but what's the reason :

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.

KJV version

Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will. (eudokia autos thelema)

Etymology : eudokia good pleasure “eu” good “pleased, opinion”
IT MEANS DELIGHT, SATISFACTION, DESIRE

In short : God CHOSE to adopt us because it gave Him pleasure to do it.

III. REDEMPTION

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.

We will spend sometime here because

Redemption is the essence of Salvation.

Without God “redeeming” us through Jesus Christ, we will not be saved.

Etymology : “apolutrosis” compound of two greek words “apo” –meaning cessation, reversal and “lutroo” – meaning ransom; from lyo

In short : it's a payment of a ransom or what we owe. (redemption is PAYMENT)

Illustration : My older brother got into the wrong crowd. He went astray. He became a drug user and as a drug user, he became a drug pusher. The problem is he wasn't giving back the money that he owed the drug lords. One time, in our conversation, he was telling the story, that he got caught by the drug lords and he was stripped of his clothes and was tied by an alambre with his hand and feet in like a sitting fetal position and a gun was placed on his head. They gave him one more chance to pay them back the money. But he told me that one of the things that they might do to him was put his feet in a block of cement and once it's dried, he will be thrown into the sea. I never saw him again.

Brothers and sisters, the Bible says all of us went astray and have sinned. We are tied by hands and feet or our feet or **is in a block of cement with no escape and any time soon, the trigger will pulled or we will be thrown into the lake of fire unless we pay back our debts which we call sin.** And the payment for sin is our very own life.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death

Question : So if the payment for our sin is death, can another person die on our behalf?

The problem is no one else can pay for our sin because all of humanity are in this block of cement. We are all in the same inescapable predicament of one of these days being drowned into the sea.

Romans 3:23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

So it's only someone who has is not in this block of cement of sin. Someone who has no sin can die on our behalf.

Who? GOD HIMSELF! He is the only one who is good and pure.

The predicament? GOD CANNOT DIE!

That's why because of God's great love, He sent His own Son Jesus Christ to become man in order to die on our behalf – THE GREAT EXCHANGE.

*2 Corinthians 5:21 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. 21 **For God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ.***

That's why

7 In him we have redemption through his blood

In short, it is in Jesus Christ, - God who became man who paid for our sin with His own life.

Because as we all know, the Bible says :

Leviticus 17:11 For the life of the flesh is in the blood:

Now what's the result of REDEMPTION?

the forgiveness of sins

Now, in order for us to understand this – FORGIVENESS means RELEASE OR SETTING YOU FREE

Example : When you forgive somebody, you're releasing them from punishment of the sin against you.

Illustration : When you're watching a movie, we will usually here this line one way or another whether in Filipino or English if it's a drama or action movie when somebody has hurt them or sinned against a character. **The line is “Kailangan pagbayaran niya ang kanyang ginawa sa akin.” (He needs to pay for what he did to me...or he needs to pay for what he did to my family”)**

Forgiveness is saying, “you don't have to pay for what you did” I'm releasing you from your debts or your obligations.

Now listen carefully :

Remember, the block of cement on your feet IS SIN and anytime you will be thrown into the sea unless you pay (which is unpayable) BUT since Jesus Christ said, “LET ME be the one to have that cement of sin and let me be the one to be thrown into the sea.” What happens now, is that IF YOU ACCEPT THIS AND BELIEVE THIS... GOD gets a jackhammer and releases you from this BLOCK OF SIN. YOU ARE FREE!!! YOU HAVE BEEN RELEASED! THAT'S WHAT FORGIVENESS MEANS!

That's what happened on the CROSS! To be nailed on the cross is the cruelest form of punishment that has ever been invented. When Jesus was nailed on the cross, ALL OF OUR SINS WAS LAID ON HIS BODY! HE WAS THE ONE PUNISHED, THE ONE WHO DIED, THE ONE THROWN INTO THE SEA ON OUR BEHALF.

1 Peter 2:24 “He himself bore our sins” in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; “by his wounds you have been healed.”

(By the punishment He got on our behalf, we have been freed or released from sin)

Etymology : healed : iaomai; to be cured, or made whole or freed from sin

BECAUSE OF JESUS CHRIST, WE ARE FREED FROM THE HOLD OF SIN (THAT BLOCK OF CEMENT) AND FROM THE PUNISHMENT OF SIN..

That's why it's foolishness, utter foolishness not to put our trust in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour. Why? It's because it's like the person whose feet is in the block of cement either telling God, I can free myself by paying for my own debts. How? Your feet is in the block of cement. Or denying that they have no debts and that their feet is not in the block of cement.

What's the reason why GOD would do this?

in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us.

GOD'S GRACE! GOD'S GRACE! GOD'S GRACE!

We haven't done nothing...IT IS ALL BECAUSE OF HIS GRACE!

Etymology : lavished, “periseuo” abounding...

I remember the favourite song that Fiel used to play when he was leading worship here.

“How He Loves Us” by David Crowder...

Here's part of the lyrics :

Oh, how He loves us

Oh, how He loves us

Oh, how He loves

... And we are His portion and He is our prize

Drawn to redemption by the grace in His eyes

If His grace is an ocean, we're all sinking

So instead of us DROWNING IN THE SEA OF PUNISHMENT IN THE LAKE OF FIRE... WE ARE ALL DROWNING IN HIS GRACE AND THE RESULT OF THAT IS ETERNAL LIFE!

That's why He gets all the glory!!!

S.G.D.