

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.

INTRODUCTION :

A young boy went to the local store with his mother. The shop owner, a kindly man, passed him a large jar of candies and invited him to help himself to a handful. Uncharacteristically, the boy held back. So the shop owner pulled out a handful for him. When outside, the boy's mother asked why he had suddenly been so shy and wouldn't take a handful of candies when offered. The boy replied, "Because his hand is much bigger than mine!"

God's hands are so big that His blessings are tremendous... more than we can ask or imagine. Today, we'll continue the spiritual blessings God has given us.

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.

Two components : "spiritual" and "blessings"

Let's talk about "spiritual" first.

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.

But spiritual blessings are the ones which are more important... these are the ones that we cannot see. Because it's spiritual.

Now it doesn't mean you can't see it, it's not there.

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

Now why are the spiritual blessings more important than the physical blessings?

Question : How important is “love, joy and peace” in your life? These are spiritual blessings!

THINK : The problem is we think that the physical blessings are the ones that will give us the spiritual blessings like “love, joy and peace.”

This is the reason why spiritual blessings are more important THAN physical blessings... WHY?
IT'S BECAUSE PHYSICAL BLESSINGS ARE TEMPORARY AND CAN BE EASILY TAKEN AWAY FROM US.

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.

How are we sure that these spiritual blessings will not 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.

Significance : Our spiritual blessings are so secure because it is guarded in heaven itself!!!

Do you think anything that is guarded in heaven will be lost? Not even the devil when he tried was successful. He was immediately thrown to the earth when he tried. (Ezekiel 28; Revelation 12)

That's why the Bible says:

Romans 8: 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

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.

Illustration : There's this non-profit organization called THEMENSGROOMER. It was started by a barber named John Schneidman who has been cutting hair since he was 14 years old. Now, he's about 54 years old. One day, he and his business partner went out with a backpack and cordless clippers and chose some homeless people on the streets of Hollywood Boulevard and gave some of these men haircuts.

(SHOW PHOTOS) Here are some the before and after shots : (Before the haircut and after the haircut)

<https://www.boredpanda.com/homeless-people-haircut-jason-schneidman/>

Remember, John Schneidman approached them. The homeless guys did not go to his shop but John went on the streets of Hollywood Boulevard and chose some of these men and gave them haircuts.

I'm telling this story because before WITHOUT CHRIST, we were homeless, hopeless and helpless. Now because of Christ, we are blameless.

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.

It's what you call predestination.

We cannot become children of God, We cannot be saved or forgiven and We cannot have all the spiritual blessings, if GOD HASN'T CHOSEN US!

*5 he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus 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,*

Etymology: predestined “proorizo” pro “before” “horizo” (where we get the word horizon)... the horizon, boundaries.

MEANING : Even before everything was set, God has already chosen that we will be saved.

Election and predestination is a biblical doctrine.

Romans 8: 29 For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters.

As Christians, God already knew us even before we were born and He has chosen us to become like His Son Jesus Christ.

*Psalm 139: 16 Your eyes saw my unformed body;
all the days ordained for me were written in your book
before one of them came to be.*

Imagine that. GOD CHOSE US. We did not do anything to deserve it and yet God chose us.

He even said that to Jeremiah.

Jeremiah 1:5 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, before you were born I set you apart; I appointed you as a prophet to the nations.”

This is where it gets much better. Why did God choose us?

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

Positionally speaking : IN THE EYES OF GOD, YOU ARE HOLY AND BLAMELESS.

If you are a Christian, when God looks at you, you are

Etymology : holy “hagios” separated, consecrated

I preached about the meaning of holiness before : We get that in Old Testament “qadosh” and in Greek “hagios”. It means God separated us FOR HIS GLORY!

It means God has separated you and made you His.

This means, we belong to God! This is the reason why Jesus Christ saved us... so that we will be “holy” separated, consecrated to Him!

That's why in Isaiah, God says :

*Isaiah 43: 1 But now, this is what the Lord says—
he who created you, Jacob,
he who formed you, Israel:*

*“Do not fear, for I have redeemed you;
I have summoned you by name; you are mine.*

This is the reason why in Zechariah, God says :
Zechariah 2:8 for whoever touches you touches the apple of his eye—

I love the New Living Translation on this :
For he said, “Anyone who harms you harms my most precious possession.

We'll talk more about that next week :

And in the eyes of God (in His sight, when He looks at us), we are blameless. Wow!
4 For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

Etymology : blameless “amomos” a “none” momos” blemish, blot.. “flaw”

What does this mean?

In the eyes of God, we are perfect, we are righteous... which means “karapat-dapat” worthy. It's because only those who perfect can stand in front of a pure, perfect and Holy, Holy, Holy God!

Remember, this is “positionally” speaking, not practically speaking... OF COURSE, we are not perfect simply because WE ARE STILL IN THIS BODY....

That's why Paul says :

*Romans 7: 24 What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body that is subject to death? 25 Thanks be to God, who delivers me through Jesus Christ our Lord!
So then, I myself in my mind am a slave to God's law, but in my sinful nature a slave to the law of sin.*

8:1 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

Why is there now no condemnation, it's because in the EYES OF GOD, WE ARE WORTHY... WE HAVE NO FLAW

How? Not because of what we have done but because of what Christ has done. That's why last week, I emphasized that this blessing IS OURS BECAUSE OF CHRIST!

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.

II. ADOPTION

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

Illustration : I always love telling this story. The last time I saw my dad “Tatay” was in 2009. It was my Tatay and Nanay's 50th anniversary. They were having a big celebration but I already told them I won't be able to come because I wanted to surprise them. My siblings knew I was coming but not my parents. On the day of the wedding, me and my father-in-law went and we parked the car far away enough from the church so that my parents wouldn't see me. But when I got out of the car, my Tatay was there and it was far enough so that he wouldn't recognize me. So when I got out of the

car, my Tatay looked and he said, “Ay si Jerry!” My siblings and all my Titos and Titas said, “That’s not Jerry.” But my Tatay insisted, “Si Jerry yan... (nope, that’s Jerry,) My siblings said, “How are you sure it’s Jerry?” And my Tatay said, one of the best words that I’ve ever heard said about me. It still rings true in my ears, very vivid! **“Sigurado ako si Jerry yan... anak ko yan.”** (I’m sure that’s Jerry...he’s my son!)

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

God looks down from heaven and sees Noel and says “I am sure...that’s Noel... anak ko yan! Because of my Son Jesus Christ!”

Look at this :

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

Again, even before the creation of the world, God has already chosen us to be called His children.

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

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—

Etymology : love “agape”

Remember WHAT AGAPE LOVE is all about?

Other kinds of love, “eros” “storge” “phileo”, it means,

“I love you because I have to.” – It means “I love you because you’re nice, you’re good, you’re beautiful or you’re rich”

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)

That’s the motivation, love! Even when He chose the Israelites in the Old Testament this is what He said, “

Deuteronomy 7: 7 The Lord did not set his affection on you and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. 8 But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath he swore to your ancestors that he brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

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.

Illustration : I remember the time I was still dating Chicay. She lives in Marikina and I live in Fairview. I don't have a car. To go to her, I have to ride one tricycle, 3 jeepneys and one tricycle. But there was a time that there was a storm and you know in Marikina, when it floods, in my wife's place, you will need a boat. So one time, there was a storm and I don't have a phone at home but I really wanted to see her since I haven't seen her for 3 days. So I had to ride the tricycle, 3 jeepneys and another tricycle and when I reached their street, the water was above the waist. It's a good thing I saw someone who was pushing a boat and I asked that person to push me towards their house and Chicay was surprised to see me.

She did not ask me to go BUT I CHOSE to GO BECAUSE I WANTED TO (WILL) AND IT GAVE ME EUDOKIA (PLEASURE) TO DO SO.

I remember Mel, he was telling the story that every weekend, he had to drive from Toronto to Michigan, every weekend, even in a snowstorm. That's more than 5 hour drive just to see Mae...not Lily Mae...Mae. Why? I'm sure it's BECAUSE IT GIVES HIM PLEASURE TO DO SO.

The same with the Lord! He adopted us because He loves and it gave Him pleasure to do so! It delighted Him!

But why was He doing it?

6 to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

Again, GRACE! But why glorious grace?

It's because IF WE ARE ABLE TO SAVE OURSELVES, IF WE HAVE TO WORK FOR IT! IF WE BECAME HIS CHILDREN BECAUSE WE ARE GOOD PEOPLE... WHO GETS THE GLORY? US! NO! NO! NO!

BUT GOD GETS ALL THE GLORY SIMPLY BECAUSE HE WAS THE ONE WHO CHOSE US AND MADE A WAY BY GIVING HIS OWN SON JESUS CHRIST!!! SO THAT WE CAN BECOME HIS CHILDREN.

which he has freely given us in the One he loves.

That's why the Bible says :

Romans 5: 6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. 7 Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous person, though for a good person someone might possibly dare to die. 8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Remember, GOD CHOSE US TO BE HIS CHILDREN BY GIVING HIS OWN SON JESUS CHRIST BECAUSE HE LOVES US AND THAT'S WHY IT GIVES HIM DELIGHT TO DO IT AND THAT'S WHY ALL THE GLORY GOES OUR LORD AND SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST!

Illustration : There was this kid who was born with a “balat” in his face. Sometimes, he’s uncomfortable with it. Sometimes, he gets ridiculed and bullied because of it. One day, he asked his mom on why did he have “balat” in his face? What’s the purpose of it? The mom said, “So when you are in the crowd and with other kids, I can easily spot you and say, “Look, there’s Jeremy, that’s my son.”

It's the same with our Father in heaven, when He looks down on earth and He sees the blood of His Son Jesus Christ covering us and He says to the angels, “Look, that’s my child!”

REMEMBER THIS : YOU ARE CHOSEN BY GOD. YOU ARE LOVED BY GOD AND YOU ARE A CHILD OF GOD!

Isn't that A GREAT BLESSING?

Next week : By God’s grace, we’ll talk about the spiritual blessing of Redemption, Revelation and Possession

S.G.D.