



Ephesians

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...to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.
Ephesians 1:6

This verse is again a continuation of the same thought. It is a comment on the predestination and election which was referred to in the preceding words. Taken together, they read –

“...just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.”

The words “to the praise of the glory of His grace” are a Hebraism. They bear the same meaning as, “to His glorious grace.” And so Paul is indicating that praises are due because of the process of predestination and election which have been laid out in the stream of time, and in which those who participate should be forever grateful. Such praises are made because of His glorious grace. His grace, revealed in this redemptive process, is the very basis of our gratitude towards God.

To see this further revealed, we can note that first in Ephesians 1:7 “the riches of His grace” is mentioned. Afterward, in Ephesians 1:17 & 18 the focus is on the “glory.” First it mentions that He is “the Father of glory,” and then it speaks of “the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.”

This connection between God’s glory and His grace is seen in a marvelous way in Exodus 33 when Moses spoke to the Lord –

18 “And he said, ‘Please, show me Your glory.’

19 Then He said, ‘I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.’” Exodus 33:18, 19

In this, we find that the grace of God isn't just a favor granted by Him. Rather it is one of His very attributes and a part of His divine nature. He is gracious just as He is love. Vincent's Word Studies rightly states that, “In praising God for what He does, we learn to praise Him for what He is.” We praise God because of His grace bestowed upon us, and in this we understand that we praise Him because He is gracious in His very being.

And Paul goes further yet. He says that it is this grace, “by which He made us accepted in the Beloved.” It is through Christ that the tie is made. God demonstrates His grace towards us, this very aspect of His nature, through the giving of Christ. Christ is the means of bestowing His unmerited favor upon the people of the world.

Calling Christ “the Beloved” shows the inseparable connection between the two. The love found in this Father/Son relationship is infinite. Therefore, in our uniting with Christ, the love relationship between God and us places us in that same infinite love. Christ becomes our Redeemer, our Savior, and our Mediator to God the Father.

As He gave up His Son for our salvation, not sparing Him, then how great a love God must have for us, the objects of His affection! This is the true demonstration of the glory of His grace. It is the reason why our praises are directed towards Him. We have been made acceptable in the Beloved, and thus our praise of what the Beloved has done for us are praises for what the Father has done in Him for us. The two are inseparably connected, and thus the praises are also inseparably connected. This is revealed in the words of John –

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, 2 as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. 3 And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent. 4 I have glorified You on the earth. I have finished the work which You have given Me to do. 5 And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.”
John 17:1-5

This also explains why Jesus made this claim – “He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him” (John 5:23). There can be no honor of the Father if the Son is not honored. The grace of God, shown in the Beloved, means that the praise of God either honors both or it honors neither.

Life application: Take time today to sing to the praise of God's glorious grace. [This song](#) from Michael W. Smith, based on this verse, will help you along the way.

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace... Ephesians 1:7

"In Him" means Christ who is "the Beloved" of the previous verse. It is through God's Beloved Son that "we have redemption through His blood." In the Greek, there is an article before "redemption." It states, "the redemption" and thus it sets the thought apart as the great act of redemption to which any other act (such as the redemption of Israel from Egypt) was only a type and shadow.

In other words, the promised Redeemer of Genesis 3:15 is realized in Christ. From that proclamation, every idea of redemption which is found in Scripture pointed to what Christ would do for us. This true redemption was realized "through His blood." We now stand justified and free from sin's penalty through the redemption that came by His work, and which culminated in the shedding of His blood (meaning His death) on the cross.

The term "redemption" comes from a root word which indicates the price paid to redeem a person, such as a prisoner of war. It signifies liberty from captivity, bondage, or imprisonment. We are born into sin and we are prisoners of sin, held in bondage by its power and are kept by the master of sin, the devil. This is confirmed by the devil's words to Jesus in Luke 4 where he stated that "All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish." Sin is a firm bond and the devil is a cruel taskmaster. However, Jesus' mission was to destroy this power. John notes this as the principle reason for His coming -

"He who sins is of the devil, for the devil has sinned from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."

1 John 3:8

Jesus prevailed where Adam failed. What the devil gained through Adam's disobedience, Jesus regained through His obedience. What God asks is that we simply believe this message, receive His gift, and place our trust in what Jesus has done for us. This is the "redemption through His blood." This is the marvel of what God has done for us. In Him there is absolute victory and complete reconciliation with God the Father.

As a means of highlighting this thought, Paul next says that in Him we also have "forgiveness of sins." This is a complementary thought to the previous clause. The word for "forgiveness" signifies the complete release of someone from an obligation or debt. Sin's penalty is ended through the work of Christ for all who believe.

Charles Ellicott notes that the first clause, “redemption through His blood,” looks at the work of atonement from God’s perspective, while “the forgiveness of sins” looks at it from our side. In this he says they are “both being wrought by Him who is Son of God and Son of Man at once. Together they represent the whole truth.” Joseph Benson adds to the thought by saying, “By price and by power, are bought and delivered from the guilt and dominion of sin, the tyranny of Satan, and the final displeasure and wrath of God.”

Paul notes that all of this was, “according to the riches of His grace.” This is understood to mean the riches of the grace of God the Father. As noted in Ephesians 1:6, grace is an attribute of God and is a part of His divine nature. Therefore, the giving of Christ for our redemption and the forgiveness of our sins is an expression of who God truly is. We can see the infinite grace of God when we look to the cross of Christ.

Finally, this is another marvelous verse which points to the ending of the law for all who are in Christ Jesus. Logically, if we have redemption through Christ’s blood (meaning His atoning death), and this is complementary in thought to “the forgiveness of sins,” and as sin comes about through law, then the obvious deduction for us is that we are dead to the law; its power no longer has mastery over us. Paul explains this exactly elsewhere in his writings.

Life application: As you go about your day, remind yourself of what you have received from God in the giving of His Son. Truly ponder this marvelous deed and think on what it signifies for you. There is an eternity of fellowship with God that lies ahead of us because of the cross of Jesus Christ.

...which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, Ephesians 1:8

This verse is a transition between the thought of the preceding verse which noted “the riches of His grace,” and that which will explain those riches in the following verses. At this point, Paul is stating that God has “made to abound” these riches (which are to be explained) toward us.

The Greek word translated as “made to abound” is one which indicates abundance or surplus. It means “to go beyond measure” and thus it gives the idea of overflowing. The riches of God toward us because of the Person and work of Christ simply overflow. And this superabundance which comes to us is “in all wisdom and prudence.”

Wisdom is the excellent use of knowledge. One can be extremely smart and lack any wisdom. For example, a person may have the knowledge of how to make money, but he may not have wisdom in the use of his money. In lacking wisdom, his intelligence is wasted and he remains penniless at the end of the month. Another person may not have great knowledge, but he may be quite wise. He may make very little, but at the end of the month he has money in the bank because he was wise enough to save along the way.

Prudence is noted by HELPS Word Studies as “that brand of visceral opinion which pleases the Lord because shaped by God's inworkings of faith (‘divine persuasion,’... i.e. Christ-enlightened perspective which has the insight to make intelligent (shrewd) life-applications in the will of God.”

Together, the wisdom and prudence which are indicated here reflect the wise plan which was laid out concerning man’s redemption (wisdom), and the execution of that plan by God in the stream of human history (prudence). As noted, this “wisdom and prudence” will be explained in the coming verses. They are the riches of God’s grace which have been bestowed upon us.

Life application: When we are stuck in a rut, whether mental or spiritual, all we need to do is to get into the Bible and read about what God has done for us in the stream of time. The plan was there from the beginning and was methodically being worked out for eons. At the coming of Christ, the realization of what He had been doing came about. It all centered on Christ. Now, we are the recipients of that marvelous plan. If we are stuck, pondering what Christ did for us should unstick us. Turn your thoughts to the cross and all that it signifies. How can we be anything but grateful when we consider the cross of Christ!

...having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself... Ephesians 1:9

This verse, again, is a continuation of the previous and on-going thought. The words “having made known” are a single participle which explain the words “made to abound” of the previous verse. That thought, in turn explained “the riches of His grace” of the previous verse. This is more evident when read together –

“In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace & which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself...”

It is the abounding riches of His grace which He has made known “to us.” In other words, there is a select portion of humanity to which this has been revealed. It is those who are the called in Christ; those who have heard the message of what He has done and received it. This would obviously include any who have heard the message whether they received it or not, but Paul is speaking to those who have both heard and accepted the word.

What God has “made known to us” is “the mystery of His will.” The word mystery carries with it more than what we would think of as a mere mystery that can’t be known. It does imply that which was unknown, but it also means that which has been now made known by God’s revelation. And so this mystery is that which is entirely unknowable except and unless it is revealed by God. When it is so revealed, it is a “mystery made known.” Further concerning

such a mystery, Charles Ellicott says that, “Reason can apprehend, when revealed, that which it cannot discover; but seldom or never can it comprehend it perfectly.”

The words “of His will” are actually not explained until the next verse. But they mean that there is a mystery that had yet to be revealed by God which is now revealed. Until the time had arrived, God had kept the knowledge of it back from man’s understanding, but in His providence, He has now (meaning in what Paul is writing about) revealed this portion of His will. And this is “according to His good pleasure.”

God has sovereignly determined when, or even if, He will reveal His will to His creatures. We may have a secret that we keep from our loved ones, even until our death. Or we may choose to divulge it at a certain time when we believe that they are ready to hear it. Maybe the children of the family need to come to a state of mental maturity before they hear the news which is hidden. The same is true with God’s mysteries. These are things which cannot be known unless He reveals them to us. The timing of their being revealed is solely up to Him. Behind the timing is the purpose for hiding the thing.

Therefore, being infinitely wise, God knew in advance what He would conceal and when He would reveal it. The revealing of such mysteries are those “which He purposed in Himself.” For this reason, we can find no fault in God for the actions He takes. Being angry at God over things which belong to Him alone makes no sense. He has a right to withhold or reveal His will in His good timing. The words of this verse go along well with the words of Romans 11:34 –

“For who has known the mind of the LORD?
Or who has become His counselor?”

God has chosen our time, place, and position in history for His reasons. When we consider where we are now, we can be grateful in many ways for it. Despite the woes of the world in which we live, we have a great and glorious benefit of our current position. Jesus explained it to those around Him –

“Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he.”
Matthew 11:11

John was chosen to live at a specific time in history and was considered very great in that particular dispensation of time, and yet those who followed after him would have a revealing of the mysteries that he was not privy to. In this, they hold a position even greater than he did. Such is the wisdom of God.

Life application: In the world today, we are seeing the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, even right before our eyes. What a blessed time to live! We have a confirmation of the words written so

long ago which can help us in our times of weakness where our faith is lacking. And certainly this is needed as the world spirals down all around us. Be thankful for the sure evidences we possess which come right out of God's marvelous word!