

EPHESIANS 1:3b  
The Wonderful Work of Salvation  
Message 8, Dec. 6, 1998

Intro: We have begun a wonderful passage of Scripture, Ephesians 1:3b-14. I said in the last message that the first clause in verse 3, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..." is the main clause of everything in verses 3-14. In the following verses we are going to see a number of reasons why He is to be blessed. This morning we are going to look at the first reason why we should bless God. We find this in the second part of verse 3. It is because He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

2. The reasons He is to be blessed (1:3b-14)

a. God blessed us in Christ (1:3b)

In Ephesians 1:3 we have the Triune God. There is God the Father, there is God the Son, the Lord Jesus Christ and there is God the Holy Spirit because we are talking about spiritual blessings. Ephesians 1:3-14 has the same order of the Triune God as you can discover if you read the passage.

Now our text for this morning tells us that we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

-Who HAS blessed us with every spiritual blessing with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ

The verb, *has* tells us that this has already taken place. We will soon learn in Ephesians of God's great plan from eternity past. Notice the text says He has blessed us *just as* He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. These blessings were in place in the mind and plan of God before the foundation of the world. And the very moment I become a Christian I am blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

The text does not say we could be or should be, or might be; no, it says He has blessed us! It is an indicative statement of fact. If it is not true God is a liar and you may as well throw the Bible away. Yes, we HAVE BEEN blessed!

-Who has BLESSED us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ

Last week we saw from this verse that God is to be blessed. Now we see that He has already blessed us. The TWOT says that to bless means "to endue with power for success, prosperity, fecundity (productivity or fertility), longevity, etc..." Now in the OT the blessings were, by and large, physical blessings. Look at Genesis 1:28. Blessing here means the power to procreate. It means the ability to have dominion over the animals and to subdue the earth.

Consider another passage in Genesis . You will remember the story of Joseph, sold as a slave as a young man and shipped off to Egypt. (Read 39:1-6.) Oh, I tell you, the blessing of the Lord, it makes rich and He adds no sorrow with it.

Now those are physical blessings. Later we are going to see what is meant by spiritual blessings. But, as the physical blessings make for an enriched and prosperous, healthy, vibrant physical life, so spiritual blessings will do that for us in our spiritual lives.

-Who has blessed US with every spiritual blessing with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ

Now notice that Paul says that God has blessed us. In the text he is referring to himself and all the Ephesian believers. But with no hesitation we may include ourselves in this us as well, if we are truly Christians.

During the recent evangelistic meetings in town two young girls from this church gave their heart to the Lord. I have a little word for these girls. The moment you accepted Jesus as your Savior you were blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

-Who has blessed us with every SPIRITUAL BLESSING in the heavenly places in Christ

Now notice the adjective Paul uses to describe these blessings. They are spiritual blessings. Adjectives are words that limit or describe. Now here we have a limitation. These are not physical blessings Paul is talking about. Most of the blessings in the OT are physical, material blessings (read Deut. 28:1-14?).

You see, we have not been blessed with every physical blessing. Then we would not have sickness, or accidents or pain, or material problems such as weeds or break downs. As a matter of fact, spiritual blessings may override physical handicaps so that one may be a fulfilled and happy person in the midst of trouble and trials.

What are spiritual blessings? Well, salvation is a spiritual blessing. You see, in Christian salvation we are not talking about being saved from physical death, or cancer, or a fatal accident or such like. No. We are saved from sin and its consequences. That is a spiritual blessing. You can't see it but it is still very real.

Here is another spiritual blessing. All born again believers have been sanctified. They have been set apart from all the rest of mankind and from every religion in the world. They belong to God personally. That is a spiritual blessing. You can't see it, but it is very real.

Now notice another amazing word.

-Who has blessed us with EVERY spiritual blessing with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ

I heard a preacher once say he had done a deep theological study in the Greek language on the word *all*. And he had made an amazing discovery. It meant *all*. Now if you did some research in the Greek language you would find that the word *all* and *every* are usually the same Greek word. So the outcome of all that is that this word means we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing. Every single one!

But how significant is that? I mean, does every spiritual blessing refer to 3, 4, 5, 10 blessings? In the following list of spiritual blessings I am going to borrow from Neil Anderson who wrote the book *Bondage Breaker*. I am going to revise some of his wording and add to it. But I am indebted to him for a number of these things. Here is a list you can claim if you are a Christian:

- 1) I am God's child (Jn. 1:12)
- 2) I am Christ's friend (Jn. 15:15)
- 3) I have been declared righteous by God (Rom. 5:1)
- 4) I am united with Christ in His death, in His burial and in His resurrection (Rom. 6:1-6)
- 5) I have been bought by God with a price and belong to Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20)
- 6) I am a member of Christ's body (1 Cor. 12:27)
- 7) I have direct access to God through the Holy Spirit (Eph. 2:18)
- 8) I have been redeemed (Eph. 1:7)
- 9) I am complete in Christ (Col. 2:10)
- 10) I am free from condemnation (Rom. 8:1-2)
- 11) God works all events together for my spiritual good (Rom. 8:28)
- 12) Nothing has the power to separate me from the love of God (Rom. 8:35-39)
- 13) I have been established, anointed and sealed by God (2 Cor. 1:21-22)
- 14) I am a citizen of heaven (Phil. 3:20).

- 15) I have not been given the spirit of fear (2 Tim. 1:7)
- 16) I have been given the spirit of power, of love and of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7)
- 17) I can find grace and mercy in a time of need (Heb. 4:16)
- 18) I am born of God and the evil one cannot touch me (1 Jn. 5:18)
- 19) I am the salt and light of the earth (Matt. 5:13-14)
- 20) I have been chosen to bear fruit for God (John 15:16)
- 21) I am God's temple and He indwells me (1 Cor. 3:16)
- 22) God has given me the ministry of reconciliation (2 Cor. 5:18)
- 23) I am a new creation in Christ (2 Cor. 5:17)
- 24) I am God's workmanship created in Christ Jesus (Eph. 2:10)
- 25) I may approach God with freedom and confidence (Eph. 3:12)
- 26) I am enabled to do all things through Christ who strengthens me (Phil 4:13)

Well, that is the tip of the iceberg I'm sure. Our text said, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ." Isn't that marvelous? But notice something else in our text:

-Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing IN THE HEAVENLY PLACES in Christ

Now this phrase, in the heavenly places, is literally, in the heavenlies; and occurs 5 times in this book (1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12). From 1:20 we find that Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father in the heavenlies. In 2:6 we find that we have been raised up to sit together with Christ in the heavenlies. That is true of course because, spiritually we are in Christ. (See Eph. 1:1.) Then in 3:10 we find that through the Church, the multitude of individual believers, God is seeking to make known to the principalities and powers in the

heavenlies the multi faceted wisdom of God. Then in 6:12 we find a demonic host of wicked beings who still have access to the heavenlies.

Now, what does it mean to be blessed *in the heavenlies*? Here verse 1 is helpful. Paul has given the physical location of the recipients of this letter. They are in Ephesus. But then he gives their spiritual location as being in Christ Jesus (See also Phil. 1:1). Since these are spiritual blessings they affect man in his spiritual location, which is in Christ.

We sing, "This world is not my home, I'm just a passing through." We are pilgrims and strangers here. Philippians 3:20 says our citizenship is in heaven. The Christian not only has two natures, but he lives in two spheres. I am in the world and I am in Christ. Here we see some of the great change that takes place when one becomes a Christian. Later we are going to come to the doctrine of adoption. In preparation for that let me mention something to you here. Ephesians 1:7 says that in Christ we have redemption. Man is a three part being. He is made up of body, soul and spirit. When man is saved he is redeemed. He is born again and his soul and spirit undergo a regeneration. But the body does not undergo any change at all. It is still a dying tent. But there is a day coming when the body too, will be redeemed. No longer will I have two natures. No longer will I live in two spheres. The redemption of the body will be a profound thing. But oh what a wonderful change will take place, when I physically dwell where my spiritual being is already! Well, we are going to look at that in the doctrine of adoption.

So we find that it is in our spiritual location in Christ that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing. But we find yet one other locality mentioned.

-Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places IN CHRIST

God has blessed us in the heavenlies, in Christ. Ten times we are said to be in Christ in Ephesians (1:1,2,10,12,20; 2:6,10,13, 3:6,11). Once we are said to be in Him (1:4). There is a sense in which this speaks of the doctrine of initial sanctification. When I am born again, that very moment I am initially sanctified. That is, I am set apart from this world of lost mankind and placed in Him. When I am in Him, then I am, of course, set apart from this world. The moment I am placed in Him I am blessed with every spiritual blessing.

In verse 4 we will find that we have been blessed in Him just as we are chosen in Him. The words *just as* show a comparison and I believe the comparison is one of purpose. God blessed me with every spiritual blessing for the very same purpose that he elected or chose me in Him and that is that I should be holy (sanctified) and without blame before Him. So there is a purpose for being blessed with every spiritual blessing and we will take up this purpose in verse 4.

Concl: Today we have seen that the Christian has been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies, in Christ. Now you are going to say, "Why do I not feel very blessed? How may I come to experience these blessings which I have in Christ?"

I am told of a poor Texas farmer who, year after year, eaked out a living on his farm. Later in life an oil company asked permission to drill on his land and he became rich when the oil company discovered that under this property was a large reservoir of oil. Actually, this farmer had been rich all the time. He simply didn't know it. In order to experience our riches in Christ we must first of all get to know what those riches are.

Paul prays for the Ephesians in 1:17-18, that the God our our Lord Jesus Christ the Father of glory may give to the believer the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. He prays that God will enlighten the eyes

of their understanding. Now there is something very important here. The truth is that our spiritual eyes are darkened by our lust for the things of this world. We must get our eyes in the Word of God. And then we must ask God for the spirit of wisdom and revelation.

I can tell you today by some small manifestations of truths God has helped me to understand, that if this should take place, even every once in a while in our Christian lives we would be transformed. Our life is often so dark and dismal for lack of knowledge. God said in the OT, "My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge." That is our blight as well.

So if I would experience these blessings, I must first have a knowledge of them and that comes from reading and studying God's Word. Then I must appropriate those truths by faith. In Ephesians, praise God, we are going to come to a knowledge of a good many of these blessings. It will then remain for us to appropriate them by faith. May God enrich our lives in these blessings in days to come.