

Ephesians 1:2-3, “**Grace** be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings* in heavenly places in Christ.”

All Spiritual Blessings In Christ

This letter of Ephesians is about riches, not exhaustible material wealth that can be lost, but the inexhaustible riches that every believer possesses in Christ as a present reality.

Paul sums our riches in this verse with the phrase "every spiritual blessing" and then he proceeds to explain them and to tell us how we can draw on them for effective Christian living.

We need to remember that man's "days are like grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. When the wind has passed over it, it is no more; and its place acknowledges it no longer.

Why wouldn't God put material blessings in this list of spiritual blessings? The answer is simple -- they don't last for eternity, whereas the things not seen do last forever!

The epistle to the Ephesians should be a treasure store to which we go repeatedly anytime we get discouraged.

A story was once told that there was an old Navajo Indian who had become rich because oil had been found on his property. He took all the money and put it in a bank. His banker became familiar with the habits of this old gentleman. Every once in a while the Indian would show up at the bank and say to the banker, "Grass all gone, sheep all sick, water holes dry."

The banker wouldn't say a word -- he knew what needed to be done. He'd bring the old man inside and seat him in the vault. Then he'd bring out several bags of silver dollars and say, "These are yours." The old man would spend about an hour in there looking at his money, stacking up the dollars and counting them.

Then he'd come out and say, "Grass all green, sheep all well, water holes all full." He was simply reviewing his resources, that's all. That is where encouragement is found -- when you look at the resources which are yours, the riches, the truths which undergird your faith.

This morning we considered the glory of Jesus Christ in our salvation. Tonight I would like to look at some of the spiritual blessings found in Christ. The first one I would like to consider is found in verse 2. (Read the verse).

What is grace? Grace is the free, unmerited favor of God, and here in verse 2 grace is included in a salutation, undoubtedly a form of a blessing or prayer. It is infinite because its source is God. Therefore, being finite creature we can't comprehend the infinite grace of God toward sinners. But we can understand to some degree the inestimable value of grace in our lives.

Grace is like the "bookends" of Ephesians, Paul beginning and ending with a prayer for grace for the saints. Paul ends Ephesians with the words, "Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen."

In fact, with the exception of the epistle to Romans, every Pauline letter begins and ends with "grace", thus constantly emphasizing the fact that the Christian life begins with grace, is lived by grace and ends with grace, not by reliance on self or works.

The book of Ephesians is so full of the subject, that it has been called "The Epistle of Grace."

A practical definition of grace is that it represents God's enabling power to overcome the world, the flesh and the devil.

Without dependence upon grace, saints cannot live the supernatural (victorious) Christian life. Matthew Henry defines grace as the unmerited and "free favor and good-will of God, and all the blessed fruits and effects of it".

It is hardly too much to say that God has in no word uttered Himself and all that was in His heart more distinctly than in this word grace!

Read Ephesians 2:8-9.

The double blessing of "grace" and "peace" comes "from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ."

The Pulpit Commentary notes that...“Peace is conjoined with grace; they are like mother and daughter, or like twin sisters. Grace is the only foundation of true peace—whether peace with God, peace of conscience, rest and satisfaction of soul, or peace toward our fellow-men. The source of grace and peace is “God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

Peace means (to join or fasten together so as to bind together that which has been broken or divided) conveys the idea of setting at one again.

Peace therefore is that common accord and tranquility which results in the joining together again those who were separated, such as a sinner and a holy God through the blood of Christ.

Eirene is the root word for our English word "serene" (serenity) which means clear and free of storms or unpleasant change, stresses an unclouded and lofty tranquility.

The same word is used in Philippians 4:7, “And the **peace** of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Christ Jesus through the blood of His Cross binds together that which was separated by human sin when the sinner puts his or her faith in Christ Jesus the Lord.

Politicians labor for world peace. Men and women strive for inner peace. But the most important peace to achieve in this life is peace with God, and this peace can only be attained through Jesus Christ.

To have peace with God means that there is nothing--no sin, no guilt, no condemnation--that separates us. And that peace with God is possible only through Christ.

Romans 5:1 declares, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:"

Do you know this kind of peace in your heart?

We read in Ephesians 1:2, "Grace be to you, and peace, from God *our Father*, and from the Lord Jesus Christ..."

“Father” suggests that the following description of "every spiritual blessing" is His provision for the members of his adopted family, for all fathers desire to be the source of blessing for their children.

And so too our great heavenly Father desires to be the Source of blessing for his family, and that is what he is in this passage.

Christ addressed his father fondly in Mark 14:36, “And he said, **Abba, Father**, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt.”

Similarly, we, as believers, call upon our dear Father in Romans 8:15, “For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, **Abba, Father.**”

Galatians 4:6, “And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, **Abba, Father.**”

Verse 3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings* in heavenly places in Christ.”

Lord (kurios] describes the One Who has absolute ownership and sovereign power and authority.

Kurios means master, owner, one who has absolute ownership power. Jesus is referred to some ten times as **Savior** and some seven hundred times as **Lord**. He is supreme in Authority. It is also notable that **kurios** is the noun the translators of the Septuagint (LXX) chose some 7000 times for the Hebrew word **Jehovah**.

Paul explains **Christ's Lordship** writing in **Philippians 2:9-11**, “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Lord therefore is not merely a name that composes a title, but signifies a call to every saint to reverently bow down to Jesus Christ.

If Christ is our **Lord**, we are to live under Him, consciously and continually submitting our wills to Him as His bondservants, always seeking first His Kingdom and His righteousness.

In Ephesians 1:3-14 we encounter some of the most incredible truths in all of Scripture, so that many think that there is no section of Scripture with a greater concentration of truths than those written here.

And although a cursory reading might suggest these verses are a kind of theological "maze", they are in fact very purposely laid out by divine inspiration which brings together the entire Godhead -- Ephesians 1:3-6 describes the will of the Father, Ephesians 1:7-12 describes the work of the Son, and Ephesians 1:13-14 describes the witness of the Spirit.

A commentator writes, "There is an unusual structure in this passage to which I'd like to call your attention. From Verse 3 through Verse 14 in the Greek text (not in the English) you have one complete, unbroken sentence filled with many adjectival phrases brought in to amplify and enrich it. If you want to get the effect of it, take a deep breath and try to read it through with one breath.

You will see how much Paul has crammed into this great sentence. It's almost as though he is taking a walk through a treasure chamber, like those of the Pharaohs of Egypt, describing what he sees.

He starts out with the most immediate and evident fact and tells us what that is. Then something else comes into view and he puts that in. And glory flashes upon glory here until he has this tremendously complicated sentence which includes vast and almost indescribable riches...You see, these are much more than mere doctrinal ambiguities, mere theological ideas. They are facts, foundational truths which undergird us in every moment of our life.

And, unless you understand those facts, you can't utilize them, you can't benefit from them. In that way they are like natural laws. The laws of nature operate regardless of how we feel-they are impersonal in that respect. The same thing is true of these great facts. They will do you no good if you don't discover what they are and believe them enough to operate on the basis of them.

Verse 3, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings* in heavenly places in Christ.”

Notice that in a single verse (verse 3) Paul uses the entire word family for blessing—the adjective (eulogetos), the verb (eulogeo) and the noun (eulogia) and the sentence still makes sense. The word blessed English "*eulogy*" = a speech or writing that praises someone highly) is the adjective describing the One Who is worthy of praise and in the NT is rightly used only of God and Jesus Christ.

Stated literally Paul is saying "*Let God be well spoken of (adored, praised)...bless Him for His great goodness.*" When doctrine is rightly understood (as Paul surely understood what he would expound in verses 3-14) it will naturally (supernaturally) lead to doxology (short formula expressing praise to God). When we discover Who God is and what He has accomplished for us in His Son, we cannot help but bless His holy name.

Alexander Maclaren phrases it eloquently...
“God blesses us by gifts; we bless Him by words. The aim of His act of blessing is to evoke in our hearts the love that praises. We receive first, and then, moved by His mercies, we give.

Our highest response to His most precious gifts is that we shall ‘take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord,’ and in the depth of thankful and recipient hearts shall say, ‘Blessed be, God who hath blessed us.’”

In all things speak well of Him, whether in the midst of pain, struggle, trials, frustration, opposition or adversity. Speak well of Him. And we can speak well of Him in all such circumstances when we recall to our minds that He is always good, independent of what we are experiencing or how we might feel.

Does it not strike you as absolutely amazing that the creature can even bless the Creator? What a high and holy privilege believers have and yet far too often allow to "*atrophy*" through infrequent use. Have you blessed the LORD today? Let David's words stir your soul...

“Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits” (Psalm 103:1-2).

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings* in heavenly places in Christ.”

Spiritual refers to that which belongs to the supernatural world as distinguished from what belongs to the natural world. The primary focus is the inexhaustible spiritual bank account readily available to every believer and waiting to be drawn on. Too many "wealthy" saints who are supplied with every spiritual blessing are living like spiritual paupers.

We are rich in Christ, but like all gifts they have to be received, and thus these blessings must be appropriated. We must live in the light of these blessings. We must live like they are true because they are even though they are largely unseen.

We have to come to the point where by faith we lay hold of these blessings and "possess our possessions".

We need to be like Joshua in the Old Testament to whom God declared..."Every place on which the sole of your foot treads, **I have given it to you** just as I spoke to Moses." (Joshua 1:3)

Like Joshua, God has given us the "land" so to speak, but like Joshua, our responsibility is to "put one foot in front of the other" and walk out in faith, not by sight, laying claim to our "spiritual territory" in the heavenly places in Christ.

In (en) means in and in this phrase denotes the object of our faith is Christ, the source of **every spiritual blessing**. Saints are "**in**" Christ and because of this covenantal, inseparable **union** are partakers of these benefits throughout this life and the life to come.

In the heavenly places is the place where believers receive "every spiritual blessing" because it is where the ascended, exalted Christ is (God "raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places"), and where believers also are, since they are incorporated "in Him" (God "raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus").

In contrast to the present earthly realm, which represents experiential reality for the believer, the region designated by "the heavenly places" is the location of the ascended Christ in His present state of exaltation, a spiritual reality in which believers currently share by virtue of their participation "in" Him as a result of their faith in His blood.

In closing, we possess spiritual blessings today if our hearts are resting in Jesus Christ. The limit of the gift is only in ourselves. All has been given, but the question remains how much has been taken. May the Lord help us to realize afresh how blessed we are with all spiritual blessings in Christ. Let us pray!