

The Blessings of being “In Christ” from Ephesians Chapter 1: v.1-14.

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: ² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

³ 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, ⁴ 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.

⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ 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, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him.

¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.

¹³ In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Introduction

Before we take part in our “Communion” service I would like to remind you of the great blessings that we have obtained through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Today you are either “In Christ” or “Out of Christ”. If you are “In Christ” you are truly blest today and this Communion service will be a wonderful reminder of all the riches and blessings that Jesus Christ has given you. If you are NOT “In Christ”, then you need to think about what is holding you back and compare that to what is being offered to you in this passage.

There are 3 sets of blessings in these verses.

There are blessings from God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

1. Blessings from God the Father v. 1-6.

a) He has chosen us – v. 3-4.

If you are a Christian today, it is an amazing thing to think that God chose you before the foundation of the world. We can't explain this mystery, we can only appreciate it and thank God for His sovereign choice in our lives.

b) He has adopted us – v. 5

When we become a Christian we are fully adopted as sons, because of Jesus Christ.

We have all the rights and privileges of being in God's family as one of His sons or daughters. My eldest son Andrew and his wife Ruth have two adopted sons.

It was difficult for them to accept that they couldn't have any children.

I found it difficult to accept their children fully as my grandchildren at first.

However when I reflected on my own adoption into God's family, I soon accepted them fully as my own grandchildren. I am privileged to be adopted into God's family and my 2 grandchildren are privileged to be brought into a Christian home.

You may not be married or have any children but you are privileged to be in a large family of "Adopted Children"

c) He has accepted us – v. 6.

In ourselves and in our sin we are not acceptable to God. But we are "Made" acceptable through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

Rejection is a difficult thing to experience. Some black people all over the world have experienced this because of their color. Some experience rejection because of their disability. Whatever rejection you may have experienced, there is one thing you can rejoice in today. You can rejoice in the fact that God will never reject you, if you are "In Christ"

2. Blessings from the God the Son – v. 7-12.

a) He has redeemed us – v. 7a

By dying on the cross Jesus paid the price to buy us out of the slave market of sin.

The word "Redemption" means to buy back. Our lives were so precious to God that He paid the ultimate price for our salvation. The death of Jesus set us free from being a slave to sin. The old hymn by Charles Wesley illustrates this redemption. It says "My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose up, went forth and followed thee."

b) He has forgiven us – v. 7b

The Greek word for sin is to "Miss the Mark". God's mark is 100% Holiness and if we are honest, none of us can say that we are 100% holy in God's eyes. Therefore we need to be forgiven for missing God's mark of holiness. We are forgiven through Jesus Christ, who makes us holy.

c) He has given us and made us an inheritance – v. 11-12.

An inheritance is something that we receive as a gift from somebody who loves us and wants to bless us with money or goods. They make a will and when they die, the blessing of their gift is called an inheritance. When Jesus Christ died, those people who believe in Him receive a wonderful inheritance. The biggest blessing is yet to come, when we receive our heavenly bodies, and live in a heavenly place.

Also we are an inheritance for Jesus Christ. We are the church, and the church is His body, His temple and His bride. We are in a sense God's return gift to Jesus for all that He has done, and for the sacrifice He has made.

3. Blessings from God the Holy Spirit. – v. 13-14.

a) He has sealed us – v. 13-14.

This means that God owns us and will keep us. Nobody can break God's seal upon our lives. We are safe and secure for all eternity.

In a world that is totally insecure with disasters, terrorism, poverty and greed we can gain great strength spiritually from the fact that we are in the sealed care of God's Holy Spirit.

Hallelujah, what a savior.