

CHOSEN AND CLAIMED Sunday School- December 2, 2012

Unifying Topic: SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS IN JESUS CHRIST

Lesson Text

I. Salvation Of God's Elect (Ephesians 1:3-6)

II. The Sacrifice Of The Savior (Ephesians 1:7-10)

III. The Seal Of The Spirit (Ephesians 1:11-14)

The Main Thought: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will. To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. (Ephesians 1:5-6, KJV).

Unifying Principle: All people want to feel valued and worthy. Where can we turn to receive affirmation? The writer of Ephesians declares that through Jesus Christ we gain an inheritance as God's own people to become recipients of forgiveness and salvation's redemption power.

Lesson Aim: To help the learners understand Paul's explanation of being adopted by God through Jesus Christ.

Life Aim: To promote the understanding of salvation according to God's grace of acceptance.

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ:

1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;

1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself:

1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will:

1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,

1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

HISTORY:

The church of Ephesus was the queen city of Asia Minor, situated three miles from the Aegean Sea on the Cayster River, and had a population of about 340,000. Paul founded the church at Ephesus during his second missionary journey. At the close of his journey he left Priscilla and Aquila there to work in his absence, and promised to return (Acts 18:19-21). Apollos also spent some time there (Acts 18:24-28). On his third missionary journey, Paul remained in Ephesus for about three years evangelizing the city and the surrounding region. On his last voyage to Jerusalem, Paul stopped and met the elders of Ephesus at Miletus (Acts 20:7-38). Others who labored at Ephesus were Timothy, Onesiphorus, Tychicus, and the Apostle John.

At this time Paul is writing one of his Prison Epistles. Scholars are divided as to the destination of this epistle:

1. that it was written for and sent directly to Ephesus;
2. that it was a circular letter sent to the churches of Asia Minor, of which Ephesus was the chief;
3. that it was addressed to Gentile Christians;
4. saying, the letter is the most impersonal of Paul's letters, there is no affection or warm touch in it; and
5. the words "*to the Ephesians*" are not in the oldest and best manuscripts of the Greek New Testament.

And since most manuscripts were copies of the letter sent to Ephesus, it came to be known as the Epistle to the Ephesians.

I say if it's for your church then accept the words by the Spirit of God. Paul is still the source and he writes for at least two reasons:

1. To reveal the purpose of God for the whole universe.
2. To encourage the church to walk in a spirit of oneness and unity.

1:1 begins Paul's salutation/greeting with him stating who he is, "**Paul, an apostle**"—one equipped and sent on a mission. Paul claims to be directly commissioned by Jesus Christ. "**Of**" meaning he was owned by "**Jesus Christ**" and sent from Him; he's both possessed and commissioned. "**...by the will of God**" says that Paul is always conscious of the divine origin and authority of his commission. This assurance sustained him throughout all his trials. His ministry was not of his own choosing. He is

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addressing "...the saints." The saints are the separated and holy ones of God; they are not sinless—have not attained to certain heights of sanctity, but are separated for God's use. He's writing to the saints "which are at Ephesus and to the faithful in Christ." The "faithful" are believers in Christ; they are in vital union with Christ enjoying blessed fellowship with Him.

1:2 Grace be to you, and peace, — Two common greetings. Paul begins with the Greek and Jewish blessing.

- Paul has spoken "*Grace*" (*the traditional Greek blessing*) which is the divine, free, and unmerited favor of God over them. God's grace is not earned. It is something completely underserved and unmerited. It's the free gift of God. God extends His grace out to man so man can be saved.
- Paul also declared "*Peace*" (*the traditional Jewish blessing*) which is not only the absence of all strife but the blessings of tranquility. ¹The word "*shalom*" has many meanings. It means to be well. It means to have enough for your needs. It means safety and health. We can have peace inside us even if life is difficult. Here both greetings as a blessing and a prayer. Now he adds "...from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ" shows who is the source and their help of their spiritual blessings.

LESSON:

Ephesians 1:3-6 Salvation Of God's Elect

1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: God has already given believers total blessings. Paul extends his salutation in adoration to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He lets them know that we can not only partake in God's earthly blessings but also of all God's spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ. It is far-reaching than this world. It is in the heavenly realm where Christ reigns.

1. Spiritual blessings are of the Spirit.
2. Spiritual blessings are the very opposite of temporal blessings.
3. Spiritual blessings are vastly superior to material blessings.
 - An earthly inheritance does not last.
 - An earthly nation and material inheritance cannot bring peace and security.
 - i. Man has within his inner being a basic selfishness and greed.
 - ii. Man must undergo a basic change of character to be freed of this urge, this tendency that causes so much bondage, disruption, and incision within one's self and man.
4. Spiritual blessings are found only in Christ.

God's blessings are spiritual and heavenly which are eternal instead of the temporal earthly blessings. The vital union and key is, being in Christ. There is nothing outside of Christ!

1:4 According as he hath chosen us— The first blessing is that God has chosen us. The word "*chosen*" (*Gr eklegomai*) means to pick out, to choose. We did not choose God first, He chose us. God has chosen us to be **...in him** (to be in union with Christ). God always deal with man in Christ, who is the One and only Mediator between God and man. This is God's plan of salvation; God's Will. **...before the foundation of the world,** meaning, before the projection of the world order. He looked forward and knew us before the creation of the world. ²*Chosen us in him before the foundation of the world*³ does not affirm that God chose some individuals and rejected others, but that before the world was, before there were Jew or Gentile; God chose to have a people for Himself; the whole church of Christ; a covenant people confined to no one earthly race. **...that we should be holy and without blame before him...**: The word "*holy*" (*hagios*) means to be set apart and consecrated to God. It is the same word that is used for saint in verse 1. ³God did not choose us because we were, or otherwise would have been holy, but to the end we should be holy. The word "*blameless*" (*amomous*) means to be free from sin, dirt, and filth; to be above reproach and without blemish; to be without fault and defilement. God has chosen the believer to be perfect. But note: the believer's perfection is in Christ and in Christ alone. No man—not even a believer—can live a perfect and sinless life alone from Christ. No man is righteous or ever will be, without Christ. Jesus Christ is the only Person who has ever lived a sinless and perfect life. Therefore, our only hope of ever living with God is to believe in Jesus Christ—believe so much that God will take our faith and count it as the righteousness of Christ! He loves us so much that we are also expected to display in His sight, holiness and a blameless character **in love**.

¹ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/eph-lbw.htm>

² <http://bible.cc/ephesians/1-4.htm>

³ <http://bible.cc/ephesians/1-4.htm>

1:5 Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself,— The second blessing is that God has adopted us as His children. How? – By Christ! We all want to belong whether to an earthly father and mother or to a husband or child. There is a need to be wanted and here it is that God has adopted us as His children! It was predestined, foreordained. It was love that chose us, before we were formed, to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ and it was His good pleasure to do it! When we consider the depraved state that we were in; how much we have cursed, rebelled, and rejected God, take a look at Paul who was known as Saul, and take a look at self and say, He still wanted us? The word "*predestination*" (*proorisas*) simply means to ordain beforehand, to predetermine. God designed the whole creation to accomplish the fulfillment of the plan which existed before creation. It applies to human beings, planets, galaxies, everything God ever made. The word "*adoption*" means to place as a son. Adoption is by or through Jesus Christ and by Him alone. God tells us plainly that He wants His Son to have many brothers and sisters who will love, worship, and serve Him both now and forever. God takes that person's trust and adopts him, makes him a brother or sister to Jesus Christ both present and future. And we receive full rights as His children; as His sons. ⁴The concept of "*full rights*" means that, no matter how badly we may have sinned, before conversion, there are no second-class children in God's family. God has no stepchildren. He acknowledges all as His sons. **...according to the good pleasure of his will,**— This means that it fulfills His delight, His right to do this.

1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved. ⁵This verse goes with the above verse. We must admit that it is to His praise, and not ours. Salvation through grace is none of our doing, it is His grace. "*Grace*", as we have said before, is unmerited favor. Even the fact that we are acceptable to the Father is because we have taken on the righteousness of Christ. Our righteousness was as filthy rags. It is Christ's righteousness that puts us in right standing with the Father. The Beloved, here, is Jesus Christ Himself. It is only in Him, that we are acceptable. Only through the grace of God (based on the redemptive work of Christ on the cross) could we ever have been made acceptable in the sight of God.

- He has blessed us with spiritual blessings in heavenly places;
- He has chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world; and
- He has predestined us to be adopted and accepted as sons through Jesus Christ.

He has done all of this which makes us praise Him for His wonderful grace. Our salvation came through Jesus Christ which was freely given. These blessings are related to the Father's doing.

Ephesians 1:7-10 The Sacrifice Of The Savior

1:7 In whom we have— This is a present possession, not a future prospect. The third blessing is that God has redeemed us and forgiven our sins through Christ's blood. **...redemption** (*apolutrosin*) is deliverance from bondage by means of a price paid. Saints have been liberated from the slavery of self, sin, and Satan; having been bought out of the slave market. "*If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed*" (Jh.8:36). In every case the man is powerless to free himself. He cannot pay the penalty demanded to liberate himself from his situation or bondage. **...through his blood,**— Christ's blood is the ransom price paid for our salvation. We are...

- redeemed by His blood (Eph.1:7).
- justified by His blood (Rom.5:9).
- purged as to conscience by His blood (heb.5:19).
- forgiven by His blood (Col.1:14).
- cleansed by His blood (Rev.7:14).
- Have peace through His blood (Col.1:20).
- Enter the Holy of Holies by His blood (Heb.10:19).

...the forgiveness of sins, — "*Forgiveness*" (*aphesin*) means to send off, to send away, to release, to let go. The word for "*sin*" (*paraptomaton*) means transgression, trespass, a falling by the way, or deviating from the way. All men stand guilty of having broken the law of God, and the penalty for breaking the law is death. However, the blood of Jesus Christ brings forgiveness to men. How? Jesus Christ died for man. He took the penalty of sin and bore the punishment

⁴ <http://www.keepbelieving.com/sermon/2007-01-07-Adoption-Plenty-of-Room-in-the-Family/>

⁵ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/ephesians/01.html>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

Himself. He was able to do this because He was the Perfect and Ideal Man. God counts the death of Jesus Christ for the death of man. Therefore, the guilt and penalty for breaking God's laws are completely removed. Man's sins and guilt are sent away or washed away by the blood of Jesus Christ. **...according to the riches of his grace;**— Our redemption is measured by the boundless richness of God's marvelous and infinite free grace when He sacrificed His Son to save us. His grace has never run out.

1:8 Wherein he hath abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;— This refers to God's grace being manifested toward us in super-abundance. The fourth blessing is that God has supplied us with an abundance of wisdom and discernment. The word "*wisdom*" (*sophia*) means seeing and knowing the truth. It grasps great truths of life. It sees the answers to the problems of life and death, God and man, time and eternity, good and evil—the deep things of God and of the universe. This wisdom is found only in Jesus Christ and is promised only to those who search after Him with all their heart. The word "*prudence*" (*phronese*) means seeing how to use and do the truth. It is seeing the direction to take. It is discernment, understanding, insight, the ability to solve day to day problems. It is a down-to-earth practical understanding of things.

1:9 Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, —The fifth blessing is that God has revealed the mystery of His will to us. Remember, in the bible a mystery is not something mysterious and difficult to understand. Rather, it is a truth that has been locked up in God's plan for ages until He was ready to reveal it to man. **...according to his good pleasure**— God has an eternal purpose and plan for the world, and it fulfills His delight to bring it about. **...which he hath purposed in himself:**— Without foreign aid or counsel. His purposes originated in his own mind, and were concealed until he chose to make them known. Blessings were made known; the method of redemption and salvation was made known. Christ united the two—God and man. From the beginning of time God had a plan and it evolved through Christ. All shall find its perfection and fulfillment in Him.

1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him: The mystery of God's Will can be simply stated: God is to gather together and unify all things in a spirit of peace and harmony—all things, both visible and invisible. When the time came; the time for the fulfillment of God's plan, He unlocked the truth and opened it up to man; gather together in one all things in Christ. Eventually God will bring all things together under Christ. God will settle all accounts, deal with evil and put down all rebellion. Every being will honor the Son in heaven and earth and even in Him. All this focuses on those blessings in relation to the Son.

Ephesians 1:11-14 The Seal Of The Spirit

1:11 In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: The sixth blessing is that God has given us an inheritance, that is, made us the heritage of God.

1. The inheritance or heritage was predestinated, that is, foreordained. The word "*inheritance*" (*eklerothemen*) means heritage.
 - a. There is a purpose in what God does: that we obtain an inheritance.
 - b. He works all things out well: it was thought out, predestinated.
 - c. Our inheritance was worked out well because it was His counsel of His own Will which stands and is sure!

⁶Our inheritance is in Jesus. We became heirs of the Father, because we are sons of the Father. We are sons of the Father, because we have received Jesus Christ as our Saviour and Lord. The inheritance belonged to Jesus, but when we decided to belong to Jesus, His inheritance became our inheritance, as well. We inherit Jesus and He inherits us. It became possible to those who believed in Christ. God had a plan for us long before we existed. The inheritance was for us from the very beginning, but we have to choose to accept it. God works all things out after the counsel of His own will. ⁷The meaning is that His purpose is determined by what "**He**" views to be right, and without consulting His creatures or conforming to their views.

1:12 That we should be to the praise of his glory, who first trusted in Christ.

2. Turning this scripture around, it would read; those who "*first trusted Christ should be to the praise of his glory.*"

⁶ <http://www.lovetheLord.com/books/ephesians/02.html>

⁷ <http://bible.cc/ephesians/1-11.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>

that is, the "we" may refer to the Jewish believers or to Paul and his fellow-laborers who had "first" hoped in the Saviour, and had then gone and proclaimed the message to others. Remember, Paul is still writing a letter.

3. So those, as the first to put their trust in Christ, brought praise to God's glory! They became the most precious gem and treasure of God. All stand in amazement at God's spectacular glory—their inheritance in Christ—their sure salvation which leads to have eternity with God—their spreading the gospel to the world; and it's all through Jesus Christ. His eternal grace and love shown to the world in His dear Son, Jesus Christ is praiseworthy. God's glory is the supreme purpose of our redemption.

1:13 In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,— "In whom ye also..."—⁸Now Paul makes the Ephesians (or rather all the Gentiles) equal to the Jews, because even though they came last, being called by the same Gospel, they embraced faith... Faith is the connecting link between man and Christ. Christ is the One they trusted in. Now the process begins. How?

4. This verse says there are two ways.
 1. By hearing the Word of God, the gospel of salvation: A person has to hear the Word of God before he can ever know the truth. He cannot believe in Jesus Christ unless he first hears about Christ.
 2. By believing and trusting that you are sealed with the promise of the Holy Spirit.

This is the seventh blessing: God has sealed us with the Holy Spirit of promise. As they trusted in Christ for redemption, they were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. The Holy Spirit ratifies God's ownership of believers by fixing His seal on them in a supernatural manner. We are sealed at the same time we believe, not at some later time. The sealing is not something apart from salvation, not something in addition to salvation, and not something subsequent to salvation. All who believe in Christ are sealed then and there. The seal is:

1. A sign of finished transaction (Jer.32:9-10; Jh.17:4; 19-30);
2. A sign of ownership (1Cor.16:19-20; 2Tim.2:19); and
3. A sign of security (Dan.6:17; Eph.4:30).

The Holy Spirit is called the Spirit of promise because Christ promised to send Him (Jh.14:16).

1:14 Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, The word "earnest" (*arrabon*) means pledge, guarantee, a partial down payment. The Holy Spirit is our pledge, guarantee, and our partial down payment given to the believer assuring him of his salvation until the future inheritance in glory; until the day when God completes the redemption of what He has paid for as His own. **...unto the praise of his glory**— As we combine in combination:

- Verse 6: God the Father is praised for selecting us by His mercies;
- Verse 12: God the Son is praised for securing us by His mediation;
- And in verse 14: God the Holy Spirit is praised for sealing us by His ministry.

God's purpose as it respects Himself shows His glorious wisdom, power, and mercy. We were sealed unto the praise of His glory. All of God's Will.

SUMMARY:

⁹Paul begins this epistle with an expression of praise to God for the spiritual blessings that are in Christ (3). In this doxology is a list of blessings divided into three sections. The first section describes those blessings related to the Father, how He has **chosen us** in Christ, **predestined us** to adoption as sons to Himself, and **made us accepted** in the Beloved (4-6). The second section focuses on those blessings in relation to the Son, e.g., **redemption** through His blood, **forgiveness** of sins, the revelation of His will concerning Jesus Christ, and the **inheritance** we have obtained, as predestined according to God's will (7-12). The third section describes blessings related to the Holy Spirit, how we are **sealed** with the Spirit of promise, and how He serves as a "guarantee" (or deposit) of our inheritance (13-14).

APPLICATION:

It is hard to understand how God could choose us, but He has made every provision to show He cares and loves us!

⁸ <http://bible.cc/ephesians/1-13.htm>

⁹ http://executableoutlines.com/ep/ep_01.htm

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-sundayschool.html>