

**Blessings – owed and given.**

**Eph. 1:1-14**

- 1. 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.**
- Redemption in 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.**

Payer.

Gracious and Almighty God, God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

We thank you for Your gracious love that you have poured out upon us and the ability that we have to bless and thank You for it.

Thank you for Your Word that is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our paths.

We ask now as we come to the preaching of Your Word that Your holy Spirit would enlighten the eyes of our hearts and that You would give us that burning desire to live lives that are holy and blameless before God in love.

Let our worship be a blessing to You and a sweet smelling aroma.

In Jesus Name we pray.

Amen.

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We come to a verse in the Bible today that I would call extremely pregnant.

Those mothers amongst us that has given birth, I am sure you would agree with me that when you come close to full term in your pregnancy, you might have thought to yourself, what in the world am I giving birth to, a baby elephant.

You have been stretched and prodded and kicked from inside to the point that all you want is for this little elephant to now just come out.

This is a bit of what this verse holds for us as Christians.

It is so loaded with truth and things that we need to think very seriously about that we

cannot just glance over it and expect learn what God truly wants to teach us.

### **Overview of :3-14**

Verses 3 to 14 is one long sentence in the original Greek language.

That immediately tells us that what Paul is starting with in verse three is a part of the next 11 verses and we have to understand it in that way.

Verses 3 to 14 is so loaded with different doctrines, doctrines that we need to understand and apply in our lives as Christians in order to fully realise the privilege and benefits that we have “in Christ Jesus”.

And all these doctrines are connected and cannot be separated from one another as they form the whole of our redemption in Christ Jesus.

In verses 3-6 we see God the Father’s role in our salvation.

In verses 7 to 10 we see Jesus Christ’s role in our salvation and in verses 11 to 14 we see the Holy Spirit’s role in our salvation.

We can also look at verses 4-12 in the context of a time line with regards to our salvation.

Verses 4-6 we see the past blessing, in verses 7-8, the present blessing and finally in verses 9-10 the future blessing that salvation in Christ Jesus brings and promises.

### **Blessing the One who is deserving of it!**

Immediately after Paul reminds these believers in Ephesus of who and what they are “in Christ”, and what privileges they have as Christians in verses one and two, he breaks out in a eulogy.

The words translated here as “blessed” is the same word that we use for the word eulogy.

It means to praise or speak well of someone.

This is something that we see in all of Paul’s Epistles.

Paul cannot write anything without praising and thanking God, for His love, grace and mercy towards sinful man.

We must also notice where Paul starts with his praise - **Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.**

Any praise, any worship, any thanksgiving, has to start with God the Father!!

If it does not start there, we have forgotten who it is that all blessings come from.

As James reminds:

### **James 1:16-17**

**Do not be deceived, my beloved brethren. Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.**

Because of our sinful natures, whenever we hear the word blessing or blessed, we far too often tend to think of them in terms of ourselves and the blessings we want only.

It is the same with prayer.

We need to be very careful that we don’t rush into prayer or worship without realizing who the God is that we are praising.

We desire blessings and there is no problem with that, if we approach God with the correct reverence, fear and praise we should and also ensuring that we are not being greedy in our desire for blessings.

When I speak of greed here I speak of greed with regards to only wanting for our own benefit.

All blessings originate from God and therefore we have to praise the Almighty

God who so graciously supply all these blessing before we ask for any blessings. That is Paul's way of doing it throughout his Epistles.

Martyn Lloyd Jones says it this way: "The way to be blessed is to look to God; and the more we worship Him the more we shall enjoy His blessings..... The practical man is not one who runs after blessings, but the man who considers the Source of the blessings and is in touch with that Source"

God The Father is the initiator of every blessing is very clearly brought out in verses 3 to 14.

It is God that has blessed us (:3) - who chose us (:4) - He predestined us to adoption as sons (:5) - He made us accepted in the Beloved (:6) - In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins (:7) - It is God who bestowed upon us His grace, wisdom and prudence (:7-8) - He made known to us the mystery of His will (:9) - it is God who will unite all things in the end (:9-10) - God promised us and inheritance (:11) - and it is God who sent the Holy Spirit to seal our salvation (:13-14) - it is God who works all these thing according to the council of His will!!!!

So who will you praise and give thanks to Christian?

There is none other than our God and Father of the lord Jesus Christ!!

Let us ask ourselves then, do we praise our God continuously, not just for material blessings, but for the greatest of all blessings, the fact that we are "In Christ", for the fact that we have faith, are called saints, have received God's grace and peace in our lives.

If we are very honest with ourselves, there will not be one of us hear today that can say, we don't fall short in this area of our lives!

The truth is that today we have been reminded of it and the question now remains to be asked: What are we going to do about it?

May we grown in our desire to praise our God for His grace in our lives and may we do so without ceasing!

### **Blessings Through Christ alone.**

**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,**

Paul's next focus is to ensure that these believer understand how God's blessings flow to them and us.

We have already seen in verse 1 that Paul reminded them that they are Christians because they are "in Christ Jesus".

There are no more important words in the Christian's life than "In Christ"!

No blessings from God can flow to us other than through the Lord Jesus Christ.

In the first 14 verses of this Epistle, the words "Christ", "Jesus Christ", "Christ Jesus", "The Beloved", "the Lord Jesus Christ" He, Him, His, appear fifteen times. the phrase "in Christ" or "in Him" a further eleven times.

Needless to say that when we see that in the Bible, we must understand that He is important.

Remember that before Christ we were "in Adam", Satan's children and as Paul reminds the Ephesian believers, and us, in chapter two;

**Eph. 2:11-13**

**Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.**

As Christians, true believers in Jesus Christ, all our blessings from God flow only through our Lord and Saviour!

Maybe you are sitting here today saying to yourself; “ I am not sure that I am “in Christ” or you could be asking yourself; “what does this really mean”?

God the Father planned, before the foundation of the world, in council with His Son Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, that He would give a people to His Son.

Not only did God plan the creation of a people, a human race, but He also knew that they would fail in living holy lives, that they would draw away from the gracious and holy God that created them.

So God planned, before the foundation of the world, that His Son would come to the earth, take on the form of man by being born of a woman, and His Son will die on the cross in order to take the sin of every man, woman and child on Him, so that God’s wrath can be satisfied and the penalty for our sin, which is death would be paid.

The sinless Lamb of God, our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, died on the cross, so that wretched sinners like you and I, can become the children of God, forgiven, healed, restored to full fellowship with God.

When we cry out to God to forgive us from our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

If you do not know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, beg God to forgive you, believe with your heart and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, and you will be saved.

Believer, let us never forget that very dear price that Christ paid on the cross.

Let our lives be lived mourning over our sins that placed Christ on the cross, but more so, let our lives be lived rejoicing in the fact that God has blessed us in the Beloved and that we can now call God our Father!

Once we were separated from God, without hope and without Christ, **BUT NOW**, we have a mediator with God that makes intercession for us with God.

A High Priest that knows all our sufferings and more because He suffered for us.

May we grow in our desire to live lives that are holy and blameless before God in love because we are “in Christ Jesus”!

**Blessings applied by the Holy Spirit.**

**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,**

Paul speaks here of “**every spiritual blessings**”.

Although Paul does not mention the Holy Spirit here by name, we know that His work is described :13-14.

We know through other passages in the Bible that it is the Holy Spirit that activates the faith within by indwelling us.

Without the indwelling of the Holy Spirit we can never have faith to believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord and Saviour.

That is where the deduction comes from with regards to the Trinity here in verse three.

Paul stresses the fact that these blessings that flow from God, through Jesus Christ, are spiritual blessings.

This is in contrast of what we see in the Old Testament where God's blessing to Israel were mainly material as we find in Deut. 28:1-14.

Here blessings for Israel's obedience is described as many children, a good harvest, an abundance of cattle and sheep and leadership amongst the nations.

We don't only receive spiritual blessings from God because Jesus said that the Father would supply us with all our needs and then that is clarified as water, food and clothing.

**Mat. 6:31-32**

**"Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things.**

Paul wrote in:

**Phil. 4:19**

**And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.**

God does bless us with material blessings and we do need to thank Him for those.

There is nothing that we have on this earth that we did not receive as a gift from God.

If God didn't give us the talents that we have, we would not be able to work and earn money to live.

If God didn't provide the employment that we have, then we would have nothing.

So let's praise God for these material blessings, but let's understand that the spiritual blessings are far greater than the material blessings.

The blessings that Paul refers to here is specifically spiritual in nature because the new covenant that God has made with man is spiritual as promised in **Jeremiah 31:31-34**.

God's law written on our hearts by the Holy Spirit, a personal knowledge of God, and the forgiveness of sins.

The fact that Paul adds that these blessings are in heavenly places proves that he is talking about the blessings received from God with regards to our justification, sanctification and glorification.

"In the heavenly places" here does not refer to the blue skies as we see or even the atmosphere in which we find the star, but rather it refers to the sphere where we find the "principalities and powers" Paul refers to in **Eph. 3:10 to the intent that now the manifold wisdom of God might be made known by the church to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places,**

**What then are these blessings?**

To understand this we have to go to verses 4 to 14.

I want us to notice that Paul says: **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,**

Some versions says **"all spiritual blessings"**.

There aren't any spiritual blessings with regards to our salvation, sanctification or glorification that we as Christians have not received from God at the point of our salvation.

We aren't glorified yet, but that does not mean that we won't glorified.

We must think in terms of the transaction with regards to our redemption. The transactions is complete and can never change, yet we are waiting expectantly for the day that we will meet our Lord in the sky and we will see Him as He is and we will be like Him!  
The point is that every spiritual blessing is ours already!

I am not going to do an extensive exposition of all these blessings today, unless we have another 5 hours. But we will come to that at a later time. Let me give you a list of the blessings Paul has in mind.

- 1. Election.**  
**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,**
- 2. Adoption.**  
**5. having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,**  
**3. Redemption.**  
**7. In Him we have redemption through His blood, ..**
- 4. Forgiveness of sins.**  
**7. .... the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace**
- 5. The revelation of God's purpose in history.**  
**9. having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,**

**6. the blessing of unification.**  
**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.**

**7. The sealing by the Holy Spirit.**  
**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,**

**8. An inheritance.**  
**14. who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.**

These are the blessings that Paul has in mind when he says:

**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,**

How rich a heritage do we not have as Christians?

What riches God has given to us even before the foundation of the world.

What a privilege to be able to call God our Father and not only know Him as our Judge!

Believer, Christian, won't you come to the realisation with me today that no matter how much we praise and worship our holy God, it is never enough to praise Him for the richness of the blessings that we have already received from Him.

Won't you endeavour with me today to grow in the praise and worship of our God. Won't you help me and other Christians to grow in the knowledge and the grace of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

If you don't know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour, won't you today cry out to God and beg for the forgiveness of your sins.

Having heard what God has done for us, won't you die to self in order that you might live to Christ.

If you need help, please come and ask and we will happily walk the road with you.

Let us all help one another to be disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ and let us unify as a church for the greater good of the kingdom of God.

Let's pray and as God to help us in this.

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Gracious and Almighty God, Triune God, Father Son and Holy Spirit.

How we thank you for the blessings that You have poured out upon us.

We are so grateful Father that You planned our salvation even before the foundation of the world.

That You chose us, not because of any merit of our own, but purely because of Your goodness.

Lord thank you that You came to die for our sins.

Holy Spirit thank you that You indwell us and activate that salvation within us.

Oh Triune God, please be gracious and merciful to us sinners.

Help us to worship You in spirit and in truth.

In Jesus name we pray.

Amen.