

3 BLESSED

EPHESIANS 1:3-14

• Introduction

• * * P R A Y * *

- Invite you to turn to **Ephesians 1:3-14**

Q. When was the last time somebody bought you something, gave you something, or at least tried to?

A. How did you respond? When it comes to “Acquiring” 3 options: **Earn** it, **Owe** it, or **Receive** it?

- **EARN** = Workers ethic **OWE** = Debtors ethic **RECEIVE** = Blessing ethic
- **When the Bible speaks of God “blessing us”** it is the very opposite idea of the Workers or Debtors ethic.
- **Blessing is** something that you did not earn and you are not required to pay back.
- **In EPHESIANS 1:3-14**, the Apostle Paul writes about the infinitely worthy blessings that God gives us In Christ.

Q. Where is Paul right now, Ekklesia? Prison.

- **PAUL IS FIRED UP ABOUT GOD’S BLESSINGS IN CHRIST:** This is ONE SENTENCE in the original language. 202 words in the Greek. 244 words in English (yep, I counted them).
- Read **EPHESIANS 1:3-14** then we’re going to unpack it.

IN CHRIST WE ARE BLESSED

EPHESIANS 1:3 “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, **who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.**”

Q. How many times have you heard something like, “If you would do _____, God will reign down his blessings on you” ?

- “**Spiritual blessings in the heavenly places**” = God’s not withholding blessing from you, he’s storing up blessing for you so that you can enjoy it forever.

- **Sometimes, the nastiest thing Jesus could do to you is give you what you want** (Idol)

Q. Have you ever felt Cursed? **Things are always going wrong, nothing goes right, falling apart.

- **As far as the world’s concerned**, your life may not be easy, you may not be comfortable, you may not be wealthy, you may not be healthy but... in Christ you are eternally blessed!
- **We are blessed “IN CHRIST” Paul says.** There are NO *eternal* blessings but in Jesus and through Jesus.

Paul goes on to tell us, in the longest sentence in the Bible, 9 ways we are “blessed in Christ.”

1. BLESSED WITH ELECTION

EPHESIANS 1:4a “Even as **he chose us** in him before the foundation of the world.

- **Q.** What’s the first blessing that Paul mentions? **A.** Election.
- **EXPLAIN ELECTION:** Election is the free working pleasure of the sovereign God of the universe to unconditionally choose for Himself those that His Son Jesus would save through His work in their place. ***CONDITIONAL vs. UNCONDITIONAL** **Saving faith is a PRODUCT of election*
- **APPLY ELECTION:** Imagine you were an orphan and you grew up in a dirty, oppressive, orphanage. You were a TROUBLEMAKER and even DISFIGURED. One day this guy comes in and chooses to adopt you. When he comes to you and tells you that he is going to take you away from here and rescue you. **Q.** How do you respond? How SHOULD you respond?
- **THIS MEANS:** Jesus didn’t come looking for the prettiest, the nicest, well-behaved, moral, the healthy, wealthy. Jesus came looking for the sick.
- **Election is a blessing for at least this reason:** God didn’t leave salvation to chance.

2. BLESSED WITH HOLINESS

EPHESIANS 1:4b “That we should be holy and blameless before him.”

- **EXPLAIN HOLINESS** (You’re made holy, so live holy)
God did not elect us because we were holy and blameless; God elected us so that we would be made holy and blameless in Christ.
We are made Holy because Jesus was made sin for us; we are made blameless because Jesus was blamed for us.
- **APPLY HOLINESS** (In Christ, you’ve already got an A)
Steve Brown tells a story of his daughter as she was in college.
- **Holiness is a blessing for this reason:** we are freed from the burden of HAVING to be holy in our own strength. We are to strive to live holy and blameless lives, not so we will be holy and blameless, but because we have already been made holy and blameless in Christ.

3. BLESSED WITH PREDESTINATION

EPHESIANS 1:4b-6 “In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.”

- ****STORIES****
- **PAUL’S STORY** 1) As far as Self-righteousness/Wealth/Status, He had it going on, 2) Osama Bin Laden of his day, 3) Persecuted Christians to the point of death, 4) Then Jesus shows up, blinds him, tells him to change jersey’s, and sends Paul to be the great Missionary (besides Jesus) the worlds ever seen. Paul says this in Philippians 3, “*If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: 5 circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; 6 as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless. 7 But whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ. 8 Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish, in order that I may gain Christ 9 and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which comes through faith in Christ.*”
- **MY STORY** 1) I grew up a Pastors son! but I never really cared about Jesus I just cared to look like I did, 2) I made sure and didn’t drink, cuss, smoke, or miss a church meeting, but I was dead, dead and didn’t know it 3) I was addicted to pornography by about age 15; I treated girls like objects, trying to get anything and everything I could from them sexually. Then Jesus started changing me- is changing me still.

- CHASE'S STORY** 1) Chase didn't know Jesus and was living a life consumed with Idols-girls, alcohol, weed, etc. 2) He had a good job that paid well but ALL OF A SUDDEN he felt like he should pursue a job in Graphic Design, 3) After looking for *half of an hour* he found a job, was hired, and went to work on the very last day that another guy named Nate worked there. 4) Nate invited him to come check out Ekklesia, so Chase thought it couldn't hurt. He started coming to worship, got plugged in to a Community Group, went through a Disciple Group, met Jesus, was baptized, and his life has been turned u [side down ever since.
- NATE'S STORY** 1) When talking to Nate a while back, he said, *"I gave up on God. I said Screw it! This is all Bull [crap]."* 2) Nate grew up hearing about all of the moral things that Christians should be doing for Jesus, but was never able to live up to that degree of "holiness" 3) He finally gave up. Had decided he wanted to be a Universalist, but cried out to God, *"If you're real, you gotta reveal yourself to me."* 4) Then Nate got involved in the Community Group that ended up becoming the foundational members of Ekklesia, truly met Jesus, and now serves as Pastor for Community Groups here at Ekklesia. Nate has told me, *"I tried to run away, but Jesus wouldn't let me."*
- CODY'S STORY** 1) In one of the first serious conversations I had with Cody, he said, *"Dude, my mom was on drugs when she had me. It's amazing that I only have ADHD,"* 2) Cody grew up around people that were addicted and greatly affected by drugs and alcohol, 3) by his early twenties, Cody was abusing alcohol, sleeping around, and was addicted to prescription pain killers. 4) *"All of a sudden"* Cody said, *"I started wanting to stop getting wasted, sleeping around, and doing drugs. I had no idea what was happening then, but now I know that God had chosen me and was changing my desires even before I met Jesus."* Cody did in fact meet Jesus, was saved by Jesus, was changed by Jesus, and is being continually changed as he depends on Jesus. After spending around 4 years addicted to prescription pain killers, Cody has successfully gone through rehab and is experiencing freedom from that pain and enslavement. He now has a full time job, and is seeking a degree in Psychology so he can become a gospel-centered counselor and help others find true freedom in Christ.
- CHRISTIE'S STORY** 1) When talking to Christie the other day, she reminded me that, *"The sexual abuse starting at age 5 and lasting until I was 19. The hell was tolerated by me going into survival mode but when you get out of that situation, survival mode fades an the real hell comes forth. That was what brought me to my knees."* 2) Jesus saved Christie from her sin, and cleansed her from the grotesque sins that had been committed against her her entire life. 3) Christie then quickly became involved in a church in Birmingham Alabama, but she didn't stay there long. 4) Jesus told Christie that she wasn't to stay there, but she was to move to Uganda and be a missionary there. 5) Though her church did not understand, Christie moved to Uganda, trusting that Jesus would tell her what to do. 6) 5 years later, Christie is married to a godly Ugandan man, they run a ministry that helps hundreds of Ugandan orphans go to school, receive medical attention, and have clean water. They also train local Pastor's in gospel-centered ministry. Christie and George have ? adopted kids. After having two miscarriages, doctor's told Christie that she would not be able to have any biological children of her own (likely due to the

sexual abuse she had experienced from age 5 to 19). But by the grace of God, today, George and Christie have two beautiful boys of their own, named Josiah and Frank.

4. BLESSED WITH ADOPTION

EPHESIANS 1:4b-6 “In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.”

- **EXPLAIN ADOPTION**

In Christ, you're blessed with Adoption.

Adoption is a legal procedure that secures a child's identity in a new family.

God the Father decided to adopt you before the world began.

Q. Have you ever feared that you would somehow lose your salvation?

A. In Christ, our salvation is secure because God is not our foster parent, He's our Father.

- This is why Christians love adoption!

- **APPLY ADOPTION**

40% of kids will go to bed tonight without a father.

Majority of kids born to women 30yrs and younger are born out of wedlock.

- **Some of you had a dad** but he was a horrible dad. He ignored you, he abused you, or he abandoned you.

I want you to understand that in Christ, God = loving Father + Jesus = Big Brother.

- **Some of you have a terrible family,**

I want you to understand that in Christ, the Church is your loving family.

5. BLESSED WITH REDEMPTION

EPHESIANS 1:7 “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses”

- **EXPLAIN REDEMPTION**

Redemption is the idea of something going wrong and then being made right again; Lost/Reclaimed. In Christ, we are “*REDEEMED THROUGH HIS BLOOD.*” Jesus bought us back.

- **APPLY REDEMPTION**

1 PETER 1:18-19 “You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ”

- My friend’s Christie and Cody understand redemption in a very real way.
- One was enslaved by their own sin; the other was enslaved by the sins committed against them.

Q. What have you been redeemed from? **Q.** In what ways do you need redemption?

In Christ, you’re blessed with redemption.

6. BLESSED WITH FORGIVENESS

EPHESIANS 1:7 “In him we have redemption through his blood, **the forgiveness of our trespasses**”

- **Imagine God writing a biography** about you. Every detail. Every thought. You couldn’t read it.
- **Q.** What haunts you? What in your past weighs on you?
In Christ you are blessed with forgiveness- past, present, future.
It is free for us, but it was infinitely costly to Jesus.

7. BLESSED WITH GRACE

EPHESIANS 1:7a-9 “**According to the riches of his grace**, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ”

- **Q.** Why do we get all of these blessings in Christ? Election, Holiness, Predestination, Adoption, Redemption, Forgiveness? **Grace.**

- **Grace** = Something given to you that you could not earn and that you could not and are not required to try and pay back.
- In Christ, you're blessed and *lavished* with God's Grace.

8. BLESSED WITH AN INHERITANCE

EPHESIANS 1:10-11 “to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. **In him we have obtained an inheritance**, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will.”

Q. Do you ever wonder why the Bible calls both men and women “Sons of God”?

EPHESIANS 1:5 “he predestined us **for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.**”

- **It includes men and women.**
- Paul calls us “*heirs with Christ.*” There's only supposed to be one heir, but we're ALL HEIRS.

Q. Do you fear that you're may never receive an inheritance in this life; you'll just scrape by?

In Christ, you are blessed with an eternal inheritance.

Q. What belongs to God? It's eternally yours in Christ.

9. BLESSED WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT'S SEAL

EPHESIANS 1:12-14 “so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, **were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**”

Q. How do I know that I'm blessed in Christ; elected, holy, predestined, adopted, redeemed, forgiven, have received grace, an inheritance, and the Holy Spirit?

A. IF YOU BELIEVE ON JESUS.

Q. Have you ever bought anything and written your name on it? Marked it as your possession?

WE ARE BLESSED SO THAT GOD MIGHT BE PRIZED & PRAISED

EPHESIANS 1:3,6,12,14 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ... to the praise of his glorious grace... [so that we] might be to the praise of his glory... to the praise of his glory."