

**Sermon Title:** *Ephesians:7 Spiritual Blessings for the Christian*

**Scripture Text:** Ephesians 1:3-14

**Introduction:**

Ephesians 1:3 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,<sup>1</sup>

God has given us every spiritual blessing that we need in our life. “Blessing” means a gift – or bountiful gift. That’s good to know, but what are those gifts? Paul describes them here for us in the following verses.

**Main Idea: God has given us every spiritual blessing we need**

**I. Blessing of Holiness – verse 4**

Ephesians 1:4 - 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,<sup>2</sup>

The first thing to note here is that God had established these blessings as a part of His plan before the creation – the foundation – of the world. These blessings are not an afterthought, or a “plan B” for God. He has carefully selected those blessings that we would need spiritually.

Over and over again in this passage, the Bible talks about God’s will, His purpose, His plan. All of these things are a part of God’s design for history. And He has planned some great things for us.

The first blessing is a blessing of holiness. Verse 4 says that the reason we have been chosen in Christ, is so that we should be holy and blameless. The only way that holiness will come to us is “in Him”, that is, Christ. God’s blessings (all of them) come through Christ.

Holiness is a word that means “perfect in goodness and righteousness”. To be blameless means to be without fault. God has given us a blessing in that He has given us the power in

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<sup>1</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 1:3.

<sup>2</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 1:4.

Christ to live holy live before Him. We are not longer slaves to sin, we have the power to make right decision and live righteously. This is a spiritual blessing that God has given us for out lives. It is one that we need, and that God graciously provides.

God determined before the world was created that He would have a people holy and blameless before Him, in Christ, who would be with Him forever. Just imagine! What this means is that God wants us to be with Him!

TRANSITION: Living holy lives – being holy – is one of God’s purposes for us. It is a blessing to be able to pursue holiness. The next few spiritual blessings, are really the way that we are able to arrive at the blessing of holiness, beginning with being a part of God’s family.

## II. Blessing of Adoption – verse 5

having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,<sup>3</sup>

“predestined” means pre-determined or pre-planned. Again, God has been planning this since before creation. We know that He has kind intentions (“good pleasure”) for us in His will by giving us the blessing of adoption.

God has set off the boundaries for the believer. The believer shall be adopted, made like Christ, and nothing can stop God’s plan for this.

“by” – we are able to be adopted thru the merits of Jesus Christ and His sacrifice, death, and resurrection

To be adopted is the ultimate in security. In Roman times, it was possible for a Roman father to dis-own (or even kill!) his own children, but he could not do so, by law, to an adopted child. To be adopted was the ultimate security. The Bible uses the imagery of parental nurturing to help us understand our relationship to God and His true feelings towards us. Paul says that God has adopted us as sons (and daughters) into His family. What love! What security! What a spiritual blessing!

It was God’s good pleasure to adopt us – inspite of and in the middle of our sin, He finds pleasure in adopting us. What a loving God!

TRANSITION: How are we able to be adopted? It is through, again, the redemption made possible by Christ’s sacrifice.

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<sup>3</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 1:5.

### III. Blessing of Redemption – verse 7

In Him we have redemption through His blood,

The best definition I have found for redemption: “to release upon payment of ransom”. The Bible says that we are slaves to sin before salvation. A debt must be paid to free us. Once the debt is paid, the prisoner is free to go. Through the blood of Jesus – His death – we are redeemed; that is, we are bought back by God and freed from slavery. Because the payment is made, we are free to go. This is, as verse 7 notes, according to “the riches of His grace”. We do not have to pay our debt. Jesus paid it all!

Some facts about redemption as presented in Scripture:

- 1 – man needs to be redeemed
- 2 – man is unable to free himself
- 3- God has redeemed man through the blood of Jesus Christ

The spiritual blessing that we have received is one of redemption. We are like a slave who has been set free, because his ransom, his price, has been paid. What a glorious day that would be for an earthly slave! What a blessing the rest of his life. What a spiritual blessing we carry!

**Illustration:** A story told by Paul Lee Tan illustrates the meaning of redemption. He said that when A.J. Gordon was pastor of a church in Boston, he met a young boy in front of the sanctuary carrying a rusty cage in which several birds fluttered nervously. Gordon inquired, "Son, where did you get those birds?" The boy replied, "I trapped them out in the field." "What are you going to do with them?" "I'm going to play with them, and then I guess I'll just feed them to an old cat we have at home." When Gordon offered to buy them, the lad exclaimed, "Mister, you don't want them, they're just little old wild birds and can't sing very well." Gordon replied, "I'll give you \$2 for the cage and the birds." "Okay, it's a deal, but you're making a bad bargain." The exchange was made and the boy went away whistling, happy with his shiny coins. Gordon walked around to the back of the church property, opened the door of the small wire coop, and let the struggling creatures soar into the blue. The next Sunday he took the empty cage into the pulpit and used it to illustrate his sermon about Christ's coming to seek and to save the lost -- paying for them with His own precious blood. "That boy told me the birds were not songsters," said Gordon, "but when I released them and they winged their way heavenward, it seemed to me they were singing, 'Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed!'"

TRANSITION: Closely connected with the blessing of redemption is the blessing of forgiveness.

### IV. Blessing of Forgiveness – verse 7

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins,<sup>4</sup>

Forgiveness is a “dismissal” or “release” of something owed. To forgive a debt is to require no more payment. Taken together with redemption, we understand that the debt

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<sup>4</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 1:7.

has been “fully paid”, we have been redeemed, and because of that the penalty for our sins – death – has been forgiven for us. In other words, God accepted the redemption payment through Christ’s blood, and subsequently forgave our debt as He substituted Christ’s payment onto our account.

**Illustration:** This is literally “sending away.” On the Day of Atonement there were two scapegoats involved in the yearly ritual of Lev. 16:

(1) one was sent away, symbolically carrying away Israel’s sins (cf. Ps. 103:12; Isa. 1:18; 38:17; 44:22; Jer. 31:34; and Micah 7:14);

(2) the other was sacrificed, symbolizing the fact that sin costs a life.

Jesus took fallen mankind’s sin away by dying in their place (cf. Col. 1:14) thus combining the two meanings.<sup>5</sup>

#### V. Blessing of Knowledge – verse 9-10

having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,<sup>10</sup> 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.<sup>6</sup>

What knowledge has God blessed believers with? The “mystery of His will”. Again he has “good intentions” (good pleasure) in His plan, His purposes. What is His plan? That in the “fullness of time” (the right time) He will bring everyone in Christ together under one Kingdom – the Millennial Reign of Christ.

A mystery in the Bible is not something mysterious or difficult to understand. It is something that is hidden, locked up until God reveals it.

God revealing the mystery is the main thought and theme of Ephesians.

Some point to consider:

- 1- God has a plan for the world
- 2- There is now a division of things in the world
- 3- There will be a climax – an end – to time
- 4- Jesus is God’s appointed head over all new order

God is in control of history, from the very beginning of time itself. And He has chosen to give believers a glimpse into the mystery of His plans through His Word and the Holy

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<sup>5</sup> Robert James Utley, *Paul Bound, the Gospel Unbound: Letters from Prison (Colossians, Ephesians and Philemon, Then Later, Philippians)*, vol. Volume 8, Study Guide Commentary Series (Marshall, TX: Bible Lessons International, 1997), 76.

<sup>6</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 1:9–10.

Spirit. At just the right time, Christ came into the world, and at just the right time, He will return!

As believers, we have the blessing of the knowledge of events that will take place. We have prophecies all through the Bible about the end times, especially and including the Book of Revelation. God has blessed us with knowledge of His plan – spiritual knowledge that is necessary and helpful in the Christian life.

## VI. Blessing of Inheritance – verse 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<sup>7</sup>

Again we see here that God has “predestined” according to His purpose, His plan, working everything out according to His will. God is in control and has planned these blessings from the beginning as part of His master plan.

He has decided to give us a blessing of inheritance. The Bible says that we are heirs together with Christ. This inheritance includes eternity in Heaven, mansions, and ruling and reigning with Christ!

## VII. Blessing of Guarantee – verse 13-14

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,<sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.<sup>8</sup>

The Bible says we are sealed with the Holy Spirit. A seal was used in Roman times to mark something – a document perhaps – for ownership or identity. The Holy Spirit is the evidence, the proof of our adoption. He is God’s seal on our life.

“of promise” – Jesus promised the disciples that He would come <verse>

guarantee of our inheritance – a guarantee is a pledge, or a down-payment. It is a partial payment in advance for security. The rest is yet to come. What is to come? Our inheritance of Heaven and eternity with Christ!

The Holy Spirit is like a little bit of Heaven with us now, with more promised to come.

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<sup>7</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 1:11.

<sup>8</sup> *The New King James Version* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1982), Eph 1:13–14.

CONCLUSION: **God has given us every spiritual blessing we need**

Why has God given us these blessings? The Bible tells us over and over again: It is so that we will praise Him.

“to the praise of His glory” - verse 6 meaning the Father

“to the praise of His glory” - verse 12 meaning the Son

“to the praise of His glory” - verse 14 meaning the Holy Spirit

God’s purpose is that we should praise Him for what He has done.

A. Review of main compliments  
Review the 7 Spiritual Blessings for Christians

B. Application of truth to the listener’s heart

God wants us to know that we have these blessings. He put them in His Word for us. What should be our response? Our immediate response is excitement – what wonderful blessings! What we must be committed to do is to turn our excitement into praise to God for what He has done.

C. Direction for the listener to respond to the living word of God.

- 1) Study these 8 spiritual blessings this week – pick one a day and focus on it, thanking God and praising Him
- 2) Share these with others and encourage them