

## Ephesians Ch 1 vs 3-

Last week we took the time to establish some of the main emphases of the book of Eph in a general overview and introduction to this epistle. and If you remember right I told you that it's divided into 2 basic sections ch's 1-3 and ch's 4-6, chapter's 1-3 being the foundation, chapter's 4-6 being the application. Chapters 1-3 the Holy Spirit through Paul the apostle taking the time to divulge to us or expose to us the heavenly riches and exalted position that we have in Christ. What it is that Christ has done for us, what it is that we have in Him, making clear to us that there's no reason for us to live like spiritual paupers, destitute of the necessary resources to lead successful Christian lives. Because in reality we have a vast and unlimited supply of spiritual heavenly riches in Christ from which to draw from.

I told you last week that I'd mention some of those things that are ours in Christ as presented by this letter and so just to name a few, Eph 1:3 "*every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.*" and We'll talk about that this morning, "*adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself*", "*acceptance in the Beloved*", "*the forgiveness of sins*", "*redemption through His blood*", "*the hope of His calling*", "*the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe*", "*access by one Spirit to the Father*", we are "*partakers of His promise in Christ through the gospel*", and "*filled with all the fullness of God.*" Again that's just a few that I hit but for times sake I didn't even come close to exhausting the text. and It's interesting to me that as you read the book of Eph there's not one command in the 1<sup>st</sup> 3 ch, the word "do" doesn't exist, well I take that back, it comes up 3 times but not once in the form of a command for them. The 1<sup>st</sup> time we see it Paul says, "*I do not cease to give thanks for you*" Eph 1:16, the 2<sup>nd</sup> time Paul makes a request of them, that they "*do not lose heart*" at his tribulations for them, and the last time it's in regards to Jesus' ability to do exceedingly abundantly above all we could ask or think, Eph 3:20.

Why is that? Why doesn't Paul have something to command or require of the believer in the entire 1<sup>st</sup> half of the book? Because he's trying to explain to you and me that it's already "done" in Christ, these chapters are the foundational chapters, speaking to us about what's already been done for you and imputed to you in Christ. All you have to do is believe it and act upon it, by faith, act upon these truth's the same way that you did the truth of Jesus Christ when you received Him as your savior. I was telling the people Wednesday evening that it's strikes me as odd how we receive Jesus Christ so simply, just by simple trust and faith, we believe in Him and what He's done for us and we respond to that by accepting it and allowing it to seat deep in our hearts and change our lives.

Yet all of these other truth's in the bible that are ours every bit as much as salvation itself, we make so difficult and hard to receive, and it blows my mind, God would have us receive the Promise's of His word for our lives every bit as much as we received His own Son for our lives. We received God's word concerning salvation, now why not receive God's word concerning the tremendous blessing that is yours in Christ, not because you're so cool or were such a good find for God. That's not what merits His blessing and provision for you, but it's simply a result of His grace, as much as He wanted to save your soul, He now wants to take care of you along the road to heaven. Spurgeon once said something to the effect of He who has guaranteed to bring us to heaven, will not starve us along the way.

Jesus said, if you being evil know how to give good gifts to your children, then how much more will your heavenly Father give good things to those who ask Him. and I'm not in reference to material gain, though if God wants to do that, that's fine, but He's already lavished you with all the necessary resources, and then some to equip you for a life of victory and joy and peace and so much more if you'll just draw upon those things that are yours already in Christ. Well, we'd better stop here or else we'll spend another Sunday in introduction to the book, during our time together this morning and a portion of our next gathering as we'll be looking at vs 3-14 you can know that that portion of text could be divided into 3 sections a couple of different ways. They could be broken down into a study dealing with all 3 persons of the Godhead, the Father 1<sup>st</sup>, then the Son, and rounding out with the Holy Spirit. They also deal with eternity past, the present, and then also the future, and you can see that in vs 3-10. and So you can know that so that as you look at this portion of text which in the Greek is all 1 sentence (vs 3-14) and it seems to just be heaping up blessing upon blessing in Christ, there is rhyme and reason to it, and it does have an orderly flow to it. This morning we want to take the time to take a somewhat exhaustive look (though it's impossible to plumb the depth of the riches of scripture) at vs 3, let's read it together.

### Vs3

Now there are many who believe that this is the #1 most important vs in this book, it seems to all sort of springboard off of or is developed out of this vs. The 2<sup>nd</sup> most important vs then probably being Ch 4vs1 where Paul says, "*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called.*" You've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, so walk worthy of it. Those seem to be more or less the pivotal vs of this epistle, they seem to form the heart of this letter, ch 1 vs 3 exposing the resources and ch 4 vs 1 the call to the walk that we are to sustain day by day as we draw upon those resources.

This morning we're going to spend some time in this key vs (read vs3), John MacArthur in his commentary on the book of Eph points out 6 aspects of the divine blessing as seen in this vs that Paul unfolds for us. #1 The blessed One, that being God, #2 the Blessor, that also being God, the ones whom He blesses, that being us who believe, what they blessings are, all things spiritual; the blessing location, the heavenly places and the blessing agent or mediator, that being Jesus Christ

This vs begins with a eulogy, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*" and that's a wonderful phrase that appears quite frequently in scripture, we commonly see people throughout scripture offering up blessing or tribute to the Lord. We read in, 2 Cor 1:3 "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort.*" 1 Peter 1:3 "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.*" and This word "blessed" is the Greek word "eulogetos" (yoo-log-ay-tos') from where we get our word "eulogy" and it means to praise or to speak well of, or to honor. It's a declaration of a person's goodness.

You recall when Jesus was approached by the rich young ruler and he said to Jesus "*Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?*" So He said to him, "*Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God.*" Now Jesus was there saying either one of 2 things, either that He is no good, or that He is God, and that rich young ruler was awful close to discovering the truth of what he'd just said and he didn't even know it, he saw something in Jesus and Jesus was trying to draw it out of him. Did that rich young ruler ever give his heart to Christ, we may never know the scriptures don't tell us, but the point that I'm making is that only One is truly good, and that is God.

All we can say is like Paul I know that in me, that is in my flesh, no good thing dwells, there are none that are righteous no not even one. and So since God is the only one who is truly good, our supreme eulogy, or praise is to be reserved for Him alone. You see goodness is not something that God does, it's who God is, it's His very nature, now because goodness is an attribute of His nature, He does good things accordingly, but it's important that we recognize the difference. The only person who has ever been good in accordance with the goodness of the Father is the person of His only begotten Son Jesus Christ and So we see all throughout scripture (again) men recognizing the goodness of God and ascribing blessing to Him accordingly, in Gen 14:20 Melchizedek king of Salem said, "*blessed be God Most High.*"

So even from the beginning people have been ascribing blessing unto God, that is the fruit of their lips in worship. and World history will be summed up the same way, we read in Rev 5:13 *"And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: "Blessing and honor and glory and power Be to Him who sits on the throne, And to the Lamb, forever and ever!"* and Those of you who are in tune and have come to realize who God is, do well to ascribe goodness and greatness, praise and worship, honor and glory and power, in a humbly grateful disposition to Him who sits on the throne. and To His Lamb for His great goodness, no matter what your circumstance or present lot may be in this life. Whether we find ourselves in pain, or struggle, some type of trial or frustration, opposition or adversity, we are to praise our God, because in the midst of it all; He is good.

You recall when the sons of God were presenting themselves before God in the book of Job, and Satan came along and God said to him, where have you been, what have you been up to? and Satan said, oh I've been cruising around on the earth and going to and fro and back and forth on it. and God said you've been considering My servant Job haven't you, Job is a good man, loves good, fears God and hates evil, he's blameless and upright. and Satan said of course he fears God and loves good, after all the hedge You've got around him, I can't even touch him, you let me get at him and by the time I'm done with him, he'll curse You to Your face. and So God said fine, only don't take his life, God staked His own name and His own integrity on the faithfulness of Job, what a heavy trip is that? Well any way Satan killed all of Job's servants, his livestock, and even his own kids before the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter is even over, seemingly in the same day!

You talk about hard times, you talk about trials, frustrations, opposition and adversity, Job had it all, but what did he do? Did he rise up and say, God I thought you loved me, how could you let this happen, how could a God of love allow everything I have and even my own kids to be destroyed? We read in Job 1:20-22 having heard all this news that, *"Then Job arose and tore his robe and shaved his head, and he fell to the ground and worshiped. And he said: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, And naked shall I return there. The LORD gave, and the LORD has taken away; Blessed be the name of the LORD." In all this Job did not sin nor charge God with wrong."* He didn't accuse God of giving him a raw deal, and I don't know what you're going through this morning, but you don't know but that you may have the audience of heaven peering in on your life, and they're all anticipating your reaction, God having staked His integrity on you. How will you respond to your frustration, or your adversity or hardship, will you charge God with wrong? Or will you say hey, though He slay me yet will I serve Him, blessed be the name of the Lord.

Paul writes, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who* has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Who is the One who has blessed us? The Blessed One, God our Father, the One who is innately and intrinsically good, and it's because He is good that goodness is issued out from Him to us. James tells us, *"Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does He Himself tempt anyone."* Why because there is nothing corrupt in God, He is the wellspring of goodness, now He may allow you to be tempted as such was the case with Job, but He Himself is not the source of temptation, anything that tempts you to stray from God is not directed by God. Again James 1:17 *"Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights."* Rom 8:28 *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."*

God blesses because He is the source of all blessing, of that which is good, and goodness can only come from God because there is no source of goodness outside of God. Now there are certain common graces that are issued out from God to the entire human race, the breath of life, sunshine from which to grow crops, rain by which to water them, these types of things are known as common grace.

But that's not what this is in reference to, we're speaking in Eph about the good things of God, or the blessings of God that are issued only to us who believe, they're available to His children alone. Those who are the saints and faithful in Christ Jesus whom Paul addressed in vs 1 and that's you if you know Jesus Christ in a personal way. If you've placed your trust and your faith in Him, because God has ordained that those who are of faith, are blessed Gal 3:9.

Now it would be good for us to take a moment and differentiate between our blessing Him, and His blessing us. #1 God is always the initiator and man is always the respondent, and we'll talk about that a little more next week when we deal with the subject of God's choosing us. But notice the way the text lays out, (Read) notice the blessing is in the past tense, He's already blessed us, that's why we bless Him. He initiates, we respond, we *pronounce* Him blessed, He *makes* us blessed, when we bless God, we speak well of Him, we praise Him with our lips and with our hearts with that disposition of gratefulness and humility, the psalms are loaded with psalms of blessing unto God. Ps 22:22 *"I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You."* Ps 92:2 *"It is good to give thanks to the LORD, And to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; To declare Your lovingkindness in the morning, And Your faithfulness every night."*

All throughout the Psalms and really everywhere in the scriptures you find individuals blessing the Lord by the fruit of their lips. So when we bless God we speak well *of* Him, declaring His goodness, and His grace, His mercy, and His compassion. But when God blesses us He communicates good *to* us. We bless Him with words, from our hearts, He blesses us with deeds or gifts or that which He has done, and again try and refrain your mind from wandering specifically in the material and physical.

You see all we can do is speak well of Him because we have nothing of goodness to offer Him in and of ourselves, but on the other hand He Himself lacks no goodness because that's who He is. So when He blesses us the situation is reversed, He can't bless us for our goodness, because we have none, so instead He blesses us with goodness, again every good and perfect gift is from above and comes down from the Father of Lights. and What is the blessing with which He has blessed us, well according to this text it's "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places."

Again take note of the tense of the statement, it's in the past; He already has blessed you. These aren't the things that you can one day have when you get to heaven, these are blessings that have been imputed to your account already and are yours for the utilizing if you'll only believe it and act upon it. Now there's nothing wrong to desire to be blessed of God and to desire to be a blessing to God, but what this is telling us is that we've already been blessed of God above and beyond anything we will ever need to lead lives of victory that are glorifying to God. That's something that's already taken place, now it doesn't mean that we're aware of the fullness of what all that encompasses or that we're walking in the fullness of it, but it's done nonetheless. It's a reality, and so many times we ask God to bless us in ways that are already accomplished through Christ, 2 Peter 1:3 tells us that, "*His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue.*"

So many times it's not that God needs to give us more, but in reality it's that we need to learn to appropriate what He's already given us. God's word contains within it promises to us concerning joy, concerning peace, concerning strength Col 2:10 says that we "*are complete in Him.*" and Again I'm not saying that we understand it all, or that we always walk in it all, but what I am saying is that it's there for us all. Those spiritual blessings that enable us to lead successful Christian lives, now again, we're emphasizing the spiritual here, and we're steering clear of the material all together, because we're not to worry about those things.

Turn with me to Matt's gospel ch 6 vs25-33, so God's going to take care of you, you're not to be consumed with your material needs but rather trust that over into God's hands. Because God's going to meet your needs, not your greed's, but your needs, but right now I'm trying now to get you to focus on those spiritual equippings of God that will enable you to lead strong, victorious Christian lives. He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing, where? In the heavenly places, speaking of not just heaven itself though that's definitely one aspect of it, but the heavenly places encompasses the entire supernatural realm of God. The place where Christ is seated Eph 1:20, and where the believer is seated with Him Eph 2: 6, we see reference to the heavenly places in Eph 3:10 and again as to where the warfare takes place in Eph 6:12.

So it's necessary that the believer be aware that in reality he operates in two spheres, the human and the divine, the physical and the spiritual, that which is visible and that which is invisible. You see the natural person or the worldly individual, the one who doesn't know Jesus is interested primarily in earthly things. But John tells us in 1 John 2:15-16 *"If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world--the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life--is not of the Father but is of the world."* But those are the things that people who don't know the Lord are consumed with and interested in, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life. But the scriptures tell us to *"Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth."* and Again, *"whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy--meditate on these things."*

But again I'm not saying that you should be so heavenly minded that you're no earthly good, but rather make sure that your focus is eternal, and that your priority is Jesus so that you might be effective in your walk with Him while you're on this earth. You see it's the heavenly sphere that provides the power and direction for the earthly walk. and Even though you and I may not have appropriated all the spiritual blessings in the heavenly places to our earthly walk, it doesn't change the fact that they are there for us to draw upon as we grow and mature in Christ. Which brings us to our final point, The blessing mediator or that which in the blessing is found. (Read vs again emphasizing *in Christ*).

All the resources that you need in order to lead a life that is sanctified and victorious here and now on this earth are imputed to you, in Christ. This is one of the greatest and most critical terms probably in the entire bible for the believer when you begin to realize all that it means and implies, in Christ. It means way more than if you're in Christ, you're a Christian, sure it includes that, but that doesn't even begin to scratch the surface of that term much less exhaust it. In Christ is both *where* we live and *how* we live, stop to think for a minute about what it means to live in a certain environment and then benefiting from the provisions of that environment.

For example we gather at least once a week and several of us many times a week in these four walls, and we benefit from the provisions that are ours in this environment. We have a place to sit, this environment provides that for you, there's shelter from the sun, shelter from the rain, shelter from the snow or freezing cold. The Lord has provided air-conditioning for us in this environment and heat when we need it; the Lord has provided lights where by we can read our bibles, restrooms for our convenience, there are telephones and classes for your children, P. A. so that I don't have to yell for you to hear me. There's so much to benefit from just by being in this building. A baby lives in an atmosphere for around 9 months where by it draws from the resources that are provided in the mother's womb, everything it needs in order to live and flourish and grow in health and strength is provided for that child and it draws from those resources while it's in that environment. You could think of the lakes and the fish that live in them, it's absolutely critical that a fish be in that environment and drawing from the resources and provisions of that environment in order to survive and grow.

You see these are things we can relate to, well allow me now to direct you to the fact that as believers you are to live and flourish and grow and draw from these provisions and resources that are yours in Christ. He is where you live, it's in Him (the bible says) that "*we live and move and have our being.*" Where do you live? In Joplin, no where do you really live? Oh yeah, in Christ, and we are to benefit from the provisions that are there in that environment. and We could go on and on with examples but I think you get the point, you are to abide in Christ (John ch 15) all the spiritual blessings in the heavenlies are yours in Christ. Because you are children of God and if children then joint heirs with Jesus Christ Rom 8:16-17 "*The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ.*"

Christ's riches are your riches, His resources are our resources, His righteousness is our righteousness, His power is our power. and His position is our position (Eph 2:6), where He is, we are, He has we have and His possession is our possession and so on it goes. and All that we are, and all that we have and all that we do, we do by the grace of God and to the glory of God, in Christ. Again it's not that God has little care packages of blessing that He drops from heaven to us on earth at times when we're in a desperate measure, though it times is seems that way to our finite minds. But it's far more profound than that, God's already blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, where does that leave us? Having all things, but it's imperative that we be growing and maturing and learning how to draw upon them and live by them, seeing them appropriated to our lives by faith, that same faith that allowed us to receive Jesus, is the faith that allows us to receive His blessing, let's not over complicate it, but rather simply enjoy it.