

Eph 1:7-14

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.

Paul was writing to a faithful church,

The church became complacent and left their first love,

- Do you remember your first love in Christ!

Why would He choose a wretch like me!

- Only thru His Grace

God chose the Jews because He loved them.

Deut 7:7-8

7 The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples; 8 but because the Lord loves you,

He chose us because He loves us! Don't turn from Him.

Eph 4:17-19

17 With the Lord's authority I say this: Live no longer as the Gentiles do, for they are hopelessly confused. 18 Their minds are full of darkness; they wander far from the life God gives because they have closed their minds and hardened their hearts against him.

Eph 1:7 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 (knowledge),

God's grace abounds toward us!

- Believers are rich with grace.

The Lord gives wisdom and knowledge.

- spiritual wisdom and knowledge.

A non-believer does not have this wisdom and knowledge of the Lord.

- They are spiritually discerned.

The things of the Lord are foolishness to the world.

Prov 3:13

13 Happy is the man who finds wisdom,  
And the man who gains understanding;

Eph 1:9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,

Mystery appears 6 times in the letter to the Ephesians, 27 times in the NT.

- It refers to a sacred secret
- that God reveals that couldn't be known otherwise.

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.

The fullness speaks of a (preordained time, or the right time,)

Dispensation refers to God's government and how He deals with people and with planet earth.

Paul is saying, "At the right time God is going to bring everything together under the authority of Christ the Redeemer."

Non-believers have taken this verse to mean universalism.

- Universalism says that God is going to save everybody.

Again, they cannot see the things of God because they are spiritually discerned.

God's redemption plan is only for those who are in Christ!

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,

We have a rich Father in heaven

- that has blessed us and has an inheritance for us.

1 Pet 1:4 we have an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, one that doesn't fade away.

The Father also blesses us in the here and now. (He blesses us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms)

We've been adopted into His family.

That means that if I am in Him and He is in me as the scriptures teach:

- then I too am an heir of all things.

His word is true, and we can stand on it.

There's a story in the OT,

- Habakkuk was wondering how long evil would be allowed to continue
- and if the Lord was going to do anything about it.

The Lord had plans but knew Habakkuk would like them.

I'm going to raise the enemy in order to accomplish what I'm going to do.

Then Habakkuk responds,

Hab 3:17-18

17 Though the fig tree may not blossom,  
Nor fruit be on the vines;  
Though the labor of the olive may fail,  
And the fields yield no food;  
Though the flock may be cut off from the fold,  
And there be no herd in the stalls –  
18 Yet I will rejoice in the Lord,  
I will joy in the God of my salvation.

Habakkuk trusted that God had the answers.

- He understood God had everything under control.

When we hear of predestination, and election and free will,

- trust that God has everything under control.

Paul says that the Lord works all things according to the counsel of His will,

Listen, when we put Christ first as

- Paul lays it out here,
- in verse 11 he says, "In Him," speaking of the Lord,
- in verse 12 he says, "that we," referring to us

then in verse 14 we're told

- He's the guarantee "of our" inheritance.

When we put Christ first, He will align everything else up for us.

And like Habakkuk we just have to trust.

Before we move on to verse 12, I'd like to say something regarding our inheritance.

Speaking of inheritance God said to Joshua:

Joshua 1:3-6

3 Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you, as I said to Moses. 4 From the wilderness and this Lebanon as far as the great river, the River Euphrates, all the land of the Hittites, and to the Great Sea toward the going down of the sun, shall be your territory. 5 No man shall be able to stand before you all the days of your life; as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. I will not leave you nor forsake you. 6 Be strong and of good courage, for to this people you shall divide as an inheritance the land which I swore to their fathers to give them.

God promised the land, but they had to step out in faith.

God has promised an inheritance, but only for the believer. You have to step out and received His promises.

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;

(Gentiles have now been admitted into the spiritual blessings of Israel. Salvation was God's plan for all)

God's word it's living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword.

Ps 119:105

Your word is a lamp to my feet  
And a light to my path.

During the dark ages

- the bible wasn't taught to the outside world, it was more inward.
- Darkness was the absence of God's word.

When the word of God is removed from society, darkness always follows.

Rom 10:14

14 How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

Eph 13b

in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,

As a believer you've been signed, sealed, and one day you'll be delivered.

It's as though God signed for you in eternity past,

Your salvation was activated at the cross by the Messiah, the Redeemer.

- However, your salvation was not realized in you
- until you yielded to the conviction of the Holy Spirit,
- That's when you were sealed

Each individual has to decide whether or not to receive that offer.

Rom 8:5

5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.

Rom 8:9

9 But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.

Paul says the same Holy Spirit of promise that sealed us:

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

The Holy Spirit is the down payment.

When the fullness of time has come,

- He will come and take His possession with Him.
- We've been paid in full,
- He's waiting to collect.

That's when you'll be delivered! You're already redeemed, but you'll be delivered into the presence of the Lord!

In the meantime, we've been given enough to wet our appetite. We read in verse 3 that we are blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

1 Peter 1:3

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, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

When this word is used in speaking of the Lord, it's the word "eulogētos." We get our English word eulogy from it. It means to praise or to speak well of someone.

The resurrection of Jesus guarantees our resurrection.

Matthew records in chapter 27 that many sleeping saints were raised from the dead.

- They went into the holy city
- and appeared to many (Matt 27:52-53)

Later in Acts Paul said to King Agrippa, "this thing was not done in a corner" Acts 26:26. They were the firstfruits of the coming end-times harvest.

Peter was one of the first at the tomb.

- He was present when the Lord appeared in the upper room.
- He was fishing on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus appeared once more.

Paul uses three pronouns in verses 11-14.

- verse 11, "in Him we,"
- verse 13, "in Him you,"
- verse 14 "our."

In verses 11 & 12 Paul gives the description of the Jewish believer.

Early in the letter Paul described our blessings in the Father,

- our benefits in the Son then
- our belongings in the Holy Spirit.

He's writing to faithful believers.

He reminds the Saints that they've been blessed.

He purchased our freedom and showered us with kindness.

He gives us His Spirit as a down payment

- guaranteeing final payment
- which is eternal life with Him.

He closes the chapter with a prayer for the Saints.

Eph 1:15-23

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers: 17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, 18 the eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that you may know what is the hope of His calling,

what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, 19 and what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power 20 which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, 21 far above all principality and power and might and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in that which is to come.

22 And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him to be head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

Paul does not pray that the Lord bless them with earthly possessions.

He prays spiritual blessings for the Ephesians.

The greatest gift God can ever give to an individual is salvation. P

In his prison epistles to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon he prayed something similar.

Phil 1:9-11

9 And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment, 10 that you may approve the things that are excellent, that you may be sincere and without offense till the day of Christ, 11 being filled with the fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

Col 1:9-10

do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; 10 that you may walk worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing Him, being fruitful in every good work and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Philem 6

6 that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.

Paul's prayer and the purpose for it beginning in verse 15.

15 Therefore I also, after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints,

In verse 1 he said he's writing to the faithful in Christ Jesus.

Now he's telling them again that he's heard of their faith.

Love is the identifying mark of a true believer.

Paul is a man of prayer.

16 (I) do not cease to give thanks for you, making mention of you in my prayers:

We're told in scripture that we have not because we ask not.

Vance Havner speaking of the heavenly bank once said:

- We carry checks on the bank of heaven
- and never cash them at the window of prayer.
- We lie to God in prayer if we do not rely on God after prayer.

When Jesus was speaking to the disciples about following Him, He said in

Matt 16:26

26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?  
Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

And more times than not, He gives us an abundance.

Thomas LaMance of Prewitt, NM once said

Humor: Bundles of Joy

Barbara, my six-year-old granddaughter, had been praying for a baby brother for months. So, she was overcome with joy when she saw her new twin brothers.

That night her prayer was this happy thank-you: "Dear God, thank you for sending me a baby brother. But I thought you would like to know he arrived in two pieces."  
—Thomas LaMance, Prewitt, New Mexico, *Christian Reader*, (July/August 1999).<sup>1</sup>

That's how the Lord works. We often ask for little when He has so much more for us!

Hence Paul says in the very next verse:

17 that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him,

Paul's prayer is that God the Father gives us "wisdom," "revelation," and knowledge (overflowing experiential personal knowledge) of Him.

If you're a follower of Christ this morning then you should be praying the same prayer that Paul prayed. That is that the Lord would give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

Notice Paul mentions God then Jesus.

When we pray, we usually pray in Jesus' name. That's how most believers end their prayers. We're praying to the Father, but we do it in the name of Jesus. Nothing wrong with that.

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<sup>1</sup> Christianity Today, I. (2001) [\*Today's Best Illustrations\*](#). Christianity Today International (Today's Best Illustrations).



When Stephen was stoned to death, he called on God first. Then he called on Jesus saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." Then he cried with a loud voice saying "Lord, do not charge them with this sin."

Paul prays that the Lord gives us spiritual wisdom.

Ps 111:10

10 The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom;

If we're not trusting in the Lord then we're trusting in the world system.

John D Rockefeller was America's first billionaire but drank milk and ate soda crackers because he was so sick to his stomach worrying about his wealth. He had a guard guarding his door. He had people surrounding him because he was concerned someone would take his wealth. He was wealthy and miserable.

Then he began to give some of his riches away. It wasn't until then that he began to sleep thru the night and began to eat real food again.

Here's part of what Paul was saying. You have an unlimited amount of resources in Christ.