

Sermon 2: Whole-Hearted Praise to the Father: Ephesians 1:1-6

Text: Ephesians 1:1-6 "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, to the saints which are at Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved..."

Introduction:

- We praise people with commendable qualities
- We praise them when they do commendable things.
- We praise those who have taken personal interest in our own lives.

Summary: The Father deserves our whole-hearted praise because of who He is, what He does, and how He has personally demonstrated His grace in our lives.

Proposition: We must passionately worship God with our whole hearts!

Part 1: God's worthiness: 1:3 "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ..."

- **Fact 1: God is worthy of all blessing:** "Blessed be..."
 - **"Blessed be" means to praise or commend:**
 - **Our English word "eulogy" is from our Greek term:**
 - **Example 1: 1 Chronicles 29:10-13** "David blessed the LORD before all the congregation: and David said, Blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever...Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name..."
 - **Example 2: Psalm 103:1-2** "Bless the LORD, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits..."
- **Fact 2: Paul presented three reasons to praise the Father:**
 - **Reason 1: His nature commends blessing:** "Blessed be the God and Father..."
 - **1 Chronicles 29:11** "Thine, O LORD, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is

thine; thine is the kingdom, O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all..."

- **Psalms 103:8** "The LORD is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy..."
- **Reason 2: His actions commend blessing:** "Who hath..."
 - **1 Chronicles 29:12** "Riches and honour come of thee, and thou reignest over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all..."
 - **Psalms 103:11, 13** "As the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward **them** that fear him...Like as a father pitieth his children, so the LORD pitieth **them** that fear him..."
- **Reason 3: His personal benevolence commends blessing:** "Blessed us..."
 - **1 Chronicles 29:14** "Who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee..."
 - **Psalms 103:3-5, 10, 14** "Who forgiveth all **thine** iniquities; who healeth all **thy** diseases; who redeemeth **thy** life from destruction; who crowneth **thee** with lovingkindness and tender mercies; Who satisfieth **thy** mouth with good things; so that **thy** youth is renewed like the eagle's...He hath not dealt with **us** after our sins; nor rewarded **us** according to our iniquities...For he knoweth **our** frame; he remembereth that **we** are dust..."
- **Who God is, how He has acted, and how He has dealt with us, should cause us to passionately praise Him.**

Part 2: God's grace: 1:4 "According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world..."

- **This worthiness is magnified by His grace:**
- **"Grace" means unmerited favor in justification contexts:**
 - **Romans 3:24** We are "Justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus..."
 - **Romans 11:6** "If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace..."
 - **Ephesians 2:8-9** "By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast..."
 - **Galatians 2:21** "I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain..."

- **This grace is not reactionary to good in us or done by us:**
- **It is only rooted in His goodness, work, and action toward us:**
 - "Freely by his grace..."
 - "If it be of works, then is it no more grace..."
 - "Not of yourselves...The gift of God...Not of works..."
- **Notice how he describes this grace:**
 - **It is outside of time: 1:4** "He hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world..."
 - **It goes beyond the physical and temporal realm: 1:3** "Blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places..."
 - **It is found in a person: 1:3** "In Christ..."
- **These statements apply to everyone in Christ:**
 - We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
 - Some of these blessings are immediately and fully experienced, while others are not yet fully realized.
 - This determination was not reactionary, but rather a decision that was made outside of time and space "before the foundation of the world."
- **The personal magnitude of this grace should cause us to passionately praise Him.**

Part 3: Our standing: 1:4-5 "That we should be holy and without blame before him...having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself..."

- **His grace addresses both our present and future standing:**
- **Our present standing before God:**
 - **Saints:** "That we should be holy..."
 - **Blameless:** "And without blame before him..."
 - **Accepted:** "He hath made us accepted in the beloved..."
- **An explanation of that standing:**
 - These are full present realities.
 - The determination that our standing today would be holy, without blame, and accepted was made in the past.
 - The basis of that determination has always been Christ's work.
 - The realization of that reality is our daily standing before God.
- **Stated in other scriptures:**
 - **1 Corinthians 1:2** "Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that **are** sanctified in Christ Jesus..."
 - **1 Corinthians 6:11** "Such **were** some of you: but ye **are** washed, but ye **are** sanctified, but ye **are** justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God..."
 - **Colossians 3:12** "Put on therefore, **as** the elect of God, holy and beloved..."

- **Philippians 3:9** "Found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which **is** through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which **is** of God by faith..."
- **Future: Adoption** "Predestinated us unto the adoption of children..."
 - **There is a subtle yet significant distinction between adoption and sonship:**
 - **Sonship is immediate:**
 - **1 John 3:2** "Beloved, **now** are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be..."
 - **John 3:36** "He that believeth on the Son **hath** everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him..."
 - **1 John 5:11** "This is the record, that God **hath** given to us eternal life, and this life **is** in his Son..."
 - **John 5:12** "He that hath the Son **hath** life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life..."
 - **Adoption has future ramifications:**
 - **Romans 8:23** We, "Which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, **waiting** for the adoption...the redemption of our body..."
 - **Romans 8:29-32** "Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son...whom he did predestinate, them he also called: and whom he called, them he also justified: and whom he justified, them he also glorified. What shall we then say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"
 - **Three important observations about adoption:**
 - **First:** In Roman culture, there was an immediate status change regardless of age.
 - **Second:** There was also a delayed experience of full benefit until the adopted reached maturity.
 - **Third:** The full inheritance was transferred after the father's death.
- **Perspective:** This new and future status is a stunning reversal of relationship to God.
 - **Ephesians 2:1-5** "You hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins; Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world...we all had our conversation in times

past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind; and were by nature the children of wrath..."

- **Romans 5:6-10** "When we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly...God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son..."
- **Colossians 1:21-22** "You, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled. In the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unreprouable in his sight:
- **The present and future magnitude of our standing before God should cause us to passionately praise Him.**

Part 4: God's motivation: 1:4-6 "In love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, To the praise of the glory of his grace..."

- **He purposed to create good out of evil demonstrating the greatness of His goodness.**
 - **His love for sinners: 1:4** "In love"
 - **His desire to do good for the unworthy: 1:5** "The good pleasure of His will"
 - **His desire to commend the greatness of His grace to the world: 1:6** "To the praise of the glory of his grace"
- **This passage celebrates God's resolve to complete what He has planned, secured, and given to us.**
 - He purposed before the foundation of the world.
 - He promised to send His Son.
 - He sent His Son in the fullness of the time.
 - He accepted the Son's sacrifice.
 - He has justified us by faith alone in the gospel.
 - He will complete every aspect of what Christ purchased for us on the cross.
 - He has given us His Spirit until we experience the completion of all these things.

Final Thoughts:

- **First: We must passionately worship God with our whole hearts:**
 - Purpose to grow in your understanding of His character.
 - Purpose to grow in your comprehension of His grace.
 - Reflect on who you are and what you have in Christ.
 - Rejoice in the security of your position in Christ.

- **Second: We must rest in the security we have in Christ:**
 - When you stumble, look to Christ and rest in your position.
 - When your conscience condemns you, rest in your position.
 - When you cannot escape your weaknesses and struggles, rest in your position.
- **Third: We must know our great God:**
 - We are dismissive of people worthy of praise until we get to know them and see first-hand their commendable qualities.
 - People do not praise God, because they do not know Him!