

EPHESIANS 1:1-6

NOT ON PROBATION

Blessed. Chosen. Holy. Adopted. In Christ.

THE BIG IDEA

Before the foundation of the world, God determined what would be true of everyone in Christ: blessed, holy, blameless, adopted, and loved. The Christian life is not an attempt to earn a place with the Father, but learning to live from the place Jesus has already given us.

LISTEN FOR THESE MOVEMENTS

1 Paul begins with praise, not prison.	2 Every spiritual blessing is already ours in Christ.
3 Holiness is an identity received before it becomes a life expressed.	4 Sanctification happens as we behold Jesus and become like Him.
5 Predestination is presented as pastoral assurance, not panic.	6 Adoption reveals a Father who wanted us and brought us home.

CENTRAL PICTURE

“The man on the middle cross said I could come.”

Salvation rests on Jesus, not our merit, performance, knowledge, giving, membership, or religious credentials.

1 Ephesians begins in worship

- Paul writes while under house arrest, yet his first movement is not complaint, self-pity, or an appeal for help. He begins by praising God.
- Ephesians is not merely three chapters of doctrine followed by three chapters of rules. It is a revelation of salvation that produces worship and then sends the church into mission.
- Barakah: praise that recounts what God has done to save His people. Paul retells the salvation story around Jesus.
- Ephesians 1:3-14 unfolds like one long, overflowing sentence: blessing is piled upon blessing, like notes forming one great chord of praise.

WRITE THIS DOWN

Paul starts with praise, not prison.

2 Every spiritual blessing is already ours

- “Spiritual” (pneumatikos) speaks of what is given, created, mediated, and applied by the Holy Spirit.
- “Every” is comprehensive. Paul begins naming what has already been given: election, holiness, adoption, redemption, forgiveness, revelation, inheritance, sealing, and hope.
- The “heavenly places” are not merely a future afterlife. They are the present realm of Christ’s rule and authority, the place believers receive from, live from, and are going to.
- The repeated location is “in Christ.” The blessings are not earned by human effort; they belong to those who are united with Jesus.

KEY LINE

You are not earning it. It has been given to you, so give Him the glory.

MY NOTES

3 Holy and blameless: identity before effort

- God did not choose us because He foresaw that we would make ourselves holy.
- Nor does salvation place us on probation, leaving us to prove that we deserve to remain in the family.
- The settled purpose of God is that those who are in Christ would be holy and blameless before Him.
- A believer is a new creation, yet old thought patterns, habits, and ways of reacting can still exert influence. Transformation is learning to live from what is now true in Christ.
- Failure should expose what is unlike the Father, not convince a son or daughter to pack their bags and leave His house.

WRITE THIS DOWN

We run to Him when we fail, not away from Him.

4 Sanctification by beholding

- The sermon's controlling picture is relational: a child becomes like a father by looking up to him, staying close, watching, and learning his ways.
- The more clearly we see the goodness, forgiveness, and heart of Jesus, the more that life is reproduced in us.
- Conviction becomes quicker because we recognize, "That is not what my Father is like."
- Grace received becomes grace expressed: the forgiven forgive, the loved love, and those who encounter the Father begin to reflect Him.
- The story of the man who entered church intending revenge but left asking how to become a father shows what the kindness of God can do to a human heart.

CENTRAL VERSE - 2 CORINTHIANS 3:18

"Beholding the glory of the Lord, [we] are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another."

WHAT AM I BEHOLDING MOST?

5 Predestination: pastoral, not panic

- Before creation, achievement, failure, addiction, or shame, God's purpose was already established: those in Christ would be holy and blameless.
- This truth is meant to destroy boasting. Salvation begins in God's grace, not in a testimony that starts with what "I" achieved.
- The sermon presents predestination corporately and Christ-centered: the destiny of those who are in the Son has already been settled.
- The invitation still matters. A home can be prepared and offered while a person still decides whether to receive the welcome and come in.

KEY LINE

It is pastoral, not panic. If you are in Christ, it is a done deal.

6 Adoption reveals the Father's heart

- "In love He predestined us to adoption." Love is not an afterthought; it is the atmosphere of the Father's purpose.
- "Good pleasure" (eudokia) communicates gracious intent, delight, purpose, and the joy of the Father. Salvation was His idea.
- Adoption means a new household, identity, inheritance, authority, future, and family standing.
- The Father is not searching for the easiest children to love. The Son opens the Father's house to everyone who comes home in Him.
- Believers can still live beneath their inheritance when deception convinces them that they must earn what has already been given.

WRITE THIS DOWN

You are not a probationary guest. You are a wanted son or daughter in the Father's house.

7 The church puts grace on display

- The church becomes a visible display of the grace, glory, and goodness of Christ to the world.
- Our true address is “in Christ.” That location gives believers a different perspective in suffering, sickness, disappointment, loss, and uncertainty.
- Peace, hope, joy, forgiveness, and love are not religious decoration. They reveal to others what it looks like to know the Father.
- When people see grace embodied, the desired response is not admiration of us but hunger for Jesus: “Lord, I want what they have.”

KEY VERSES AND BIBLICAL PHRASES

VERSE	WHY IT MATTERS IN THIS MESSAGE
Ephesians 1:1-6	The main text: every blessing, chosen in Christ, holy and blameless, adopted in love.
Luke 23:42-43	The thief on the cross: entrance rests on the word and merit of Jesus.
2 Corinthians 3:18	Transformation comes through beholding the glory of the Lord.
1 John 4:19	We love because He first loved us.
John 13:15	What Jesus has done for us becomes the pattern we extend to others.
Luke 7:47	The one who knows they have been forgiven much loves much.

CLOSING REFLECTION

1. When you fail, do you look more closely at your failure than at the eyes of Jesus?
2. What picture of the Father is shaping how you live: a Father who wanted you, or a landlord waiting to evict you?
3. What are you still trying to earn from God that He has already given you in Christ?

MY RESPONSE