

*The Epistle Of*  
**EPHESIANS**  
**PART 01 – BUCKET FULL OF BLESSINGS**  
*Ephesians 1:1-14*

## Salutation

### Verse 1

#### **Ephesians 1:1**

*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.*

### The Letter's Background

The letter is immediately identified as coming from Paul

- Paul sometimes used an Amanuensis, i.e. a scribe (Tertius **Romans 16:22**)
- Paul was in prison in Rome
- Paul wrote letters to Philemon and the Colossian Church at the same time
- A visiting friend, named Tychicus, carried these letters to the recipients (AD 62/63)

### The Letter's Author

Paul identifies himself as an “*apostle of Jesus Christ*”

- We will go into what constitutes an apostle and whether it's an office that can be held today in chapter 4
- His was ordained “*by the will of God*”

It was not a vocational choice

- He didn't go through a selection committee
- Gain a three-year theological qualification at a seminary or Bible college
- Go through an ordination service
- Then allocated the role 'apostle'

It was a calling

- Our ministry
- Our service
- Should always be in response to a calling
  
- You don't take the lectern to speak
- You don't pick up the guitar to play
- You don't assume an office unless called by God
- If there is no calling there is no anointing
- Where there is no anointing, there is no life (only death)

We all have a calling

- Husband, wife, parent
- Witness at work, at home, at school
- With that calling comes an anointing (an enabling by God)

### The Letter's Recipients

There are two recipients of the letter:

1. *the saints which are at Ephesus*
2. *the faithful in Christ Jesus.*

Saints = holy ones (same word used in Holy Spirit)

- Those who are distinct from the world (in Ephesus but not of Ephesus)
- Who carry the character of God

Ephesus

- A heaving metropolis in the Roman province of Asia Minor (modern Turkey)

- A significant commercial centre issuing from its harbour
- Amphitheatre (25,000 seat capacity)
- Library of Celsus (12,000 scrolls, third largest library in the ancient world)
- Temple of Artemis (Seven Wonders of the Ancient World)

Paul first visited Ephesus in AD 52-54 (ten years before this letter)

- He first attended the synagogue (as was his practice)
- Later moved his base to the school of Tyrannus
- The idea of church meeting in a school is not a new idea

The “*faithful in Christ Jesus*” can include any and all believers

- This includes us
- But the letter was probably intended to be circulated beyond the Ephesian church

## Verse 2

### **Ephesians 1:2**

*Grace be to you, and peace, from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*

As greetings go this is pretty short for Paul

- For those who in Christ Jesus
- We are in receipt of God’s grace (favour, love and kindness) and peace
- This issues forth from the Father and Son

If you don’t have a relationship with the Father and Son

- Then you will not be in receipt of grace and peace

### **John 14:27**

*Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you: not as the world gives, give I to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.*

Anything the world offers you is a poor substitute

- For what can be you’re your in Christ

## Our Spiritual Blessings

### Verse 3

### **Ephesians 1:3**

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.*

### Source of Blessings

Paul begins with praise to God the Father

- Reason - For His blessings to us
- Means - Jesus Christ

In the matter of blessing in the life of a believer

- God the Father is the source of the blessing
- Jesus Christ is the door way through whom blessing enters
- The Holy Spirit is the seal to make sure the blessing doesn’t escape or get lost

**Ephesians 1:4-6** Spiritual Blessings From the Father

**Ephesians 1:7-12** Spiritual Blessings From the Son

**Ephesians 1:13-14** Spiritual Blessings From the Holy Spirit

### Nature of Blessings

These are not material blessings

- Becoming a Christian doesn’t give you automatic entrance to materials blessings
- Wealth, health and a trouble-free lifestyle is not the guarantee of a believer

These are spiritual blessings

- That which enable us to live and operate a successful spiritual life

- That which enable us to live the life God has designed for His people

It is not just a selective, few blessings

- It is "all spiritual blessings in heavenly places"
- Everything heaven has to offer, it gives
- There is no restraint or holding back

### Appropriation of Blessings

There is bucket load of blessings available to us through Christ Jesus

- All spiritual blessings in heavenly places are available
- Yet they need to be appropriated (seized, taken advantage of)

#### Illustration

- Car with cruise control
- Purchased 2014 (two children)
- Learnt about in 2018 (four children)
- Used intermittently

## Spiritual Blessings From The Father

### Verse 4

#### **Ephesians 1:4**

*According as He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love:*

### Chosen To Be With Him

**Question:** Why are we in receipt of this bucket load of blessings?

**Answer:** "He has chosen us"

His blessings in our lives are the result of His sovereign choice and will

- We have not earned them
- We have given nothing in exchange for them
- We have no status or value that God would deem them a worthwhile gift

To be chosen is to be

- Wanted
- Valued

#### Illustration

Picking a football team

- Nobody wanted to be the last man standing
- Nobody wanted to be in goal

We are not the last man standing

- We were chosen before the "*foundation of the world*"
- Before the world was created
- Before man was formed from the dust of the ground
- God said, "I want you in my team."
- You are not His last choice, you're His first choice

**Question:** But why us? Why choose us and not someone else?

**Answer:** Because He knew that we would choose Jesus

- Some choose entertainment
- Others choose sport
- Some choose relationships
- Some choose career
- Some choose riches
- Others choose status
- Many choose religion
- Many choose the world

But you chose Jesus

- And so, God was able to choose you
- You are in His team
- And, He has fitted you out with a bucket full of blessings

### Chosen To Be In Him

*"He has chosen us in Him before the foundation of the world"*

- The "*in Him*" is the most important part
- Because that's Jesus and He changes everything

### Chosen To Be Before Him

It is not on the sports field that He wants you

- He wants you "*before Him*"
- He wants you in His presence (in His sight)
- He wants to be near you (to see you)

This speaks of love

- A desire to want to be near
- Hence, "*before Him in love*"
- He has chosen us, because He loves us

### Chosen To Be Holy & Blameless

Yet we cannot simply enter the presence of God the Father

- We are soiled with sin
- We are riddled with the world

We need to be holy and blameless to enter into His presence

#### **Hebrews 12:4**

*Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*

**Question:** What is it that you cannot see the Lord without?

**Answer:** Holiness

To be holy is to be set apart to or for something or someone

- We are to be set apart from - sin, the world and the devil
- We are to be set apart to - God the Father; through Jesus Christ; in the power of the Holy Spirit

To be blameless is to be

- Without guilt or conviction
- Without spot, blemish or fault (speaking of sacrifice)
- This is part of what can be found in the bucket load of blessings
- This is part of "*all spiritual blessings in heavenly places*"
- God will make us holy
- God will make us blameless

He will remove

- All guilt, all convictions, all condemnation
- Remove every spot, every stain, every blemish

He will make us

- Immaculate
- Holy

So that the ties to sin, the world and the devil are severed

- And we can enter into His presence
- And be bound to the King of Kings with cords of love that cannot be broken

## Illustration

Forensic Investigator will gather evidence on a crime scene

- It may look clean on the surface
- Then they use ultraviolet light to expose hidden stains

People may look clean on the surface

- But when God shines His ultraviolet light on our lives
- All manner of sin, stain, spot and blemish is exposed

But the guaranteed spiritual blessing in Christ is

- That when God shines His ultraviolet light on our lives
- It will be spotless, no incriminating evidence at all

## Verse 5

### **Ephesians 1:5**

*Having predestinated us to adoption of children by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will.*

### Adoption To Please

Predestinated = predetermine, to decide beforehand

God the Father has decided before hand

- To adopt us as His children
- Jesus Christ is the means by which this happens
  
- This is not by merit
- This is not by worth
- This not by looks

This is *"according to the good pleasure of His will"*

- It pleased the Lord to adopt us into His family

At the same time *"before the foundation of the world"* when

- He chose us
- He determined to pour into our lives a bucket load of blessing
- He put in adoption rights on our lives
- He said, "I want you."

### Adoption To Enrich

#### **Barnardo's**

*Adopting a child is a big step.*

*It's also one that can enrich your life forever – and give a stable, loving family to a child who needs one.*

It was a big step, the Lord took, in adopting you

- But it was one that not only enriched His life
- But it was one that that enriches your life also

Being adopted by God the Father

- Brings you into a stable, loving family
- You are a child that needs this family

## Verse 6

### **Ephesians 1:6**

*To the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein He has made us accepted in the beloved.*

### In The Beloved

Another name for the family of God

- Into which you have been adopted
- Is *'the beloved'*

You are loved (by God the Father)

- You have been chosen – wanted
- You have been made holy and without blame – accepted
- You have been adopted – embraced

### All Because Of Grace

All this is on the basis of His grace

- His good-will
- His loving-kindness

When you see and understand what God's grace produces

- It truly is glorious (shines brightly)
- It truly is deserving of our praise

*I'm accepted, I'm forgiven*

*I am fathered by the true and living God*

*I'm accepted, no condemnation*

*I am loved by the true and living God*

*There's no guilt or fear as I draw near*

*To the Saviour and Creator of the world*

*There is joy and peace*

*As I release my worship to You, O Lord*

## Spiritual Blessings From The Son

### Verse 7

#### **Ephesians 1:7**

*In whom we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace.*

### The Blessings So Far

So far we have drawn from the bucketful of blessings:

- We are chosen
- We are holy
- We are without blame
- We are adopted
- We are beloved

Paul now adds to this

- We are redeemed
- We are forgiven
- Both are facets of Jesus Christ's saving work in our lives

### The Blessing of Redemption

Redemption could be translated ransom

- Being released or liberated in exchange for payment

Ransom suggests being kidnapped

- We were not kidnapped (because we were never free)
- We were born into imprisonment
- The devil was the jailor
- Sin was our chains
- Execution was our sentence

Jesus Christ paid a ransom with His blood

- He took our sentence
- He was executed in our place
- He loosed our chains
- He crushed the head of the jailor
- He liberated us

## The Blessing Of Forgiveness

Forgiveness carries with it a meaning

- A pardon for a crime
- Release from imprisonment or bondage

Jesus Christ did not affect a prison break

- That would be illegal
- He secured a legal pardon

Devil may have been the jailor

God the Father was the Judge

- It was to Him the payment was made
- It was from Him the pardon was secured
- Through Jesus Christ we were released from bondage and imprisonment

## The Blessing Well

These two mighty blessings are said to be

- *"according to the riches of His grace."*
- This is the source of *"all spiritual blessings in heavenly places"*

### illustration

It's as if there is tremendous well called, "The Riches of His Grace"

- God the Father has drawn from this well with a bucket
- All the spiritual blessings possible
- Then poured out the full contents into our lives

It is reminiscent of:

### **Malachi 3:10**

*"...prove Me now herewith," says the Lord of Hosts, "if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it."*

## Verse 8

### **Ephesians 1:8**

*Wherein He has abounded toward us in all wisdom and prudence;*

## Abundant & Lavish Blessing

### **Ephesians 1:7b-8a NASB**

*according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us.*

### Illustration

When some people have a cream tea

- They take their scones
- And lightly cover them with jam and cream
- Moderate, self-controlled

Imagine we are the scone

- The jam and cream is God's blessings
- He lavished on us that jam and cream
- No restraint whatsoever
- We are oozing with blessing

## Wise & Insightful Blessing

However, it's not

- Through lack of self-control
- Through reckless abandon

It's *"in all wisdom and prudence"*

- The Lord knows fully what He's doing
- There is wisdom and insight in His actions

- Because there is an objective, an endgame He has in mind

## Verse 9

### **Ephesians 1:9**

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

### The Mystery Of His Will

God has not kept this objective, this endgame to himself

- He has, “*made known to us the mystery of His will*”

The “*us*” is the believer

The “*mystery*” is something that was once veiled but is now unveiled

- God is operating with the cards on the table
- God is operating with ‘full disclosure’

When a scandal is about to fall

- When something previously hidden is about to come to light
- One way to get ahead of the media
- Is full disclosure

For the second time says He is acting out of His “*good pleasure*”

- It is His joy and delight to let us know the “*mystery of His will*”
- He is not letting us know out of duress or compulsion
- “*He has purposed in Himself*” to act this way
- There is no scandal with God

## Verse 10

### **Ephesians 1:10**

*That in the dispensation of the fullness of times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in Him:*

This is God’s objective, His endgame:

### Endgame Timescale

*in the dispensation of the fullness of times*

Dispensation

Oversight, administration, management (of a household or office)

### Illustration

Downton Abbey

- Carson – Head of Staff (dispensation of the staff)
- Mrs Hughes – Head of the House (dispensation of the house)
- Tom Branson – Head of the Estate (dispensation of the estate)

God is overseeing and managing the whole history of mankind

- History is divided into different times
- The fullness of times – is the end of history
- After the Church Age
- After the Messianic Age
- The Eternal State – new heaven and new earth (**Revelation 21 & 22**)

### Endgame Objective

At this point of time

1. God the Father will “*gather together in one*”
2. “*all things in Christ*”
3. “*both which are in heaven, and which are on earth;*”

“*all things in Christ*”



- If you are in Christ
- If you are chosen, holy, without blame, adopted, beloved, redeemed and forgiven
- This is you

If you are not in Christ

- You will be cast into the lake of fire

### **Revelation 20:10**

*...and shall be tormented day and night forever and ever.*

*“both which are in heaven, and which are on earth;”*

People will die during the Messianic Age (thousand years reign of Jesus Christ)

- So at the fullness of times there will be those “in Christ”
- Who are on earth
- Who are in heaven

But God the Father will

- *gather together in one all things in Christ*
- On the new earth, heaven will descend to be on earth

## Endgame People

### **Revelation 21:2-4**

*And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, ‘Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, no crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.’*

*and they shall be His people*

- If you are His people now
- You will His people then

**Question:** How do I know if I am His among His people?

**Question:** How do I know if I will be among that number?

**Answer:** You love what God loves and hate what God hates  
 You long to know the Lord  
 You rejoice in Jesus Christ, your Saviour  
 You have a hunger for righteousness  
 You hate your sin  
 You want to read and understand the Bible  
 You look forward to fellowship with other believers  
 You get excited about these things

### **When The Roll Is Called Up Yonder**

*When the roll, is called up yon-der,  
 When the roll, is called up yon-der,  
 When the roll, is called up yon-der,  
 When the roll is called up yonder I'll be there*

## Verse 11

### **Ephesians 1:11**

*In whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who works all things after the counsel of His own will:*

## Our Inheritance In Glory

This new heaven and new earth is our inheritance

- For all who counted among ‘*the beloved*’ – this is our destiny
- God the Father had determined it beforehand

We have

- Inheritance - Eternal State
- Reward - Messianic Age

Just as we write a last will and testament

- As the testator we determine who will inherit our riches at the fullness of our times

So the Lord has written the New Testament

- As testator has determined who will inherit His riches at the fullness of times

## Verse 12

### **Ephesians 1:12**

*That we should be to the praise of His glory, who first trusted in Christ.*

### Our Inheritance To Be Glorious

Part of our inheritance in Christ

- Is that we should contribute to His glory
- That people would see us and be provoked to give glory to God

There should be something about us

- That stands out
- That is different

That something

- Should be seen in our conduct and behaviour
- Should be heard in our speech and conversation
- Not only in what we do and say
- But also, in what we don't do and say

This Christ-like character cannot be feigned

- It doesn't come through hard work and exertion
- It's not the result of mere discipline and a religious piety

True Godliness and a Christ-like character

1. Comes through faith in Jesus Christ
2. Application of the word of truth
3. Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit

### Faith in Jesus Christ

#### **Ephesians 1:12**

*...who first trusted in Christ.*

## Spiritual Blessings From The Holy Spirit

### Verse 13

#### **Ephesians 1:13**

*In whom you also trusted, after that you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that you believed, you were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise,*

### Application of the Word of Truth

Word of Truth

- This is both the written scriptures
- The declared gospel spoken in the power of the Holy Spirit

#### **Romans 10:17**

*So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.*

The Ephesians first heard the gospel from the lips of Paul during his second missionary journey

- Upon hearing they believed
- On believing they were saved
- The gospel, does not become "the gospel of your salvation"

- Until you believe and put your trust in it

You can hear the word of God

- You can understand the word of God
- But it not efficacious until you believe

## Power of the Indwelling Holy Spirit

Many things happen at the moment of salvation

At the moment of belief and trust in the gospel

- You are redeemed and forgiven
- You are cleansed and sanctified
- You are filled with the Holy Spirit

Paul describes it as being, *“sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise”*

- Like a bottle of Coke has a cap to keep the fizz in
- So, you are capped with the Holy Spirit to keep the salvation in

Some believe this seal can be broken

- The salvation can be lost
- I don't think this is so

This is to suggest that there is something greater than God

- That can undermine His work of salvation
- That can remove the efficacy of the blood of Jesus Christ

- Once chosen, you are not forsaken
- Once adopted, you are not abandoned
- Once redeemed, you are not cast into prison again
- Once forgiven, your pardon is not revoked
- Once beloved, nothing can separate you from the love of God

## Verse 14

### ***Ephesians 1:14***

*Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

## Spiritual Downpayment

Earnest

- Deposit or downpayment

When someone hires me to refurbish their bathroom

- I take a deposit (40%)
- Carry out the work
- Then invoice for remainder (60%)

God the Father has given us the Holy Spirit

- As a downpayment on the inheritance we shall come into at the fullness of the times
- At that time the full payment will be made

## Spiritual Inheritance

That coming into the inheritance (the full and final payment) is described as: *“the redemption of the purchased possession”*

We are the *“purchased possession”*

- We have been purchased with the blood of Jesus Christ
- So, we are the possession of God
- We belong to Him

However, our *“redemption”* is not yet complete

- We are out of prison
- Our chains have been loosed
- But we have yet to enter our inheritance

This life is a journey to that inheritance during which:

- We are stripped of our old nature
- We are trained and equipped with a new nature

We have been liberated in part

- But on the fullness of times we will be liberated in full

**Question:** How do we respond to these words?

**Answer:** With the words of Paul (to the Corinthians)

**2 Corinthians 4:18 NIV**

*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.*