

Title: **GOD'S MESSENGER AND HIS MESSAGE**
Text: Ephesians 1:1-3
Subject: *Christ Our Blessing and Blessedness*
Date: Tuesday Evening — May 30, 2006
Tape # y-97a

Introduction:

The title of my message tonight is **GOD'S MESSENGER AND HIS MESSAGE**. Our text will be Ephesians 1:1-3.

When we open the Book of Ephesians, we immediately open a door that brings us into an indescribable treasure house of grace. Everything in this Epistle is profoundly delightful and wonderfully sublime. The things written upon the pages of this Book are things that could never have been written, but by the inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. And that which is written here cannot be understood by any mortal, except God the Holy Spirit Teach them.

EPHESUS

The fact that a gospel church was established in Ephesus is itself a matter of great wonder. It was a place of great wealth, luxury, and learning. Ephesus was a city altogether given over to idolatry and the debauchery that always follows idolatry. The Ephesians erected a extravagant temple for the worship of the dunghill goddess Diana. Yet, among the Ephesians, there were many of the Lord's hidden ones, a people chosen of God and redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, who must be called. So, at the appointed time, he sent the Apostle Paul to that pagan city to preach the gospel. In accordance with his covenant promises, God sent his Spirit to gather out Christ's redeemed ones in that place to show forth his praise (Jer. 32:37-38. Ezek. 34:12; 36:24). Many believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, and a gospel church was established (Acts 19). It was to that church that this Epistle was written. But this Epistle was not written for the Church at Ephesus alone. This precious portion of Holy Scripture was inspired and written for the church of God in all ages.

PRIMARY THINGS

The primary things set before us in the opening verses of Ephesians and throughout the Epistle are:

- God's eternal love for his elect,
- the election of his people in Christ unto unspotted holiness in him,
- the full, free, and complete redemption of his people by Christ,
- and the regenerating grace of God the Holy Spirit.

CANDLESTICK REMOVED

As I have already stated, the Apostle Paul came to this city of more than 225,000 people on his third missionary journey. He preached the gospel in Ephesus for over three years (Acts 18-20). Multitudes were converted by the grace of God. A gospel church was established, which quickly became a lighthouse for truth, from which the gospel of God's free and sovereign grace in Christ went forth into all the world. The church at Ephesus was devoted to Christ. It was known throughout the Christian world for its devotion to and zeal for Christ.

But that local church, like so many since, is no more. It was, for many years, a faithful congregation. The Lord Jesus Christ discovered a very sad fault in his church at Ephesus. The pastor, the angel of the church, did not discern the fault. The people were unaware of it. But Christ saw it. Therefore he sent a letter to the church (Rev. 2), to be read publicly in the assembly of the saints. How their hearts must have

sunk when they read these words from the Savior — *“I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”* — *“He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.”* Let us each ask God to give us ears to hear and hearts to obey the word of Christ to his church. Let us each ask ourselves this question: — Is there in me a declension from my first love to Christ? Painful as the question is to the heart of one who truly does love the Savior, it must be asked and honestly answered.

Because the Ephesian church left its first love, because they found something more important to them than Christ, his gospel, and his glory, he removed the candlestick out of its place (Rev. 2:5). That great lighthouse became a den of darkness, and withered away! What a loud word of warning that should be to us! If God spared not that church, once so greatly blessed, let us take heed, lest he find reason to remove this candlestick! The Church of God must and will stand, till time shall be no more. But the candlestick is a piece of the furniture in the house, that may be removed without the least injury to the house! In other words, this local church, you and I, are expendable! Our only purpose for existence is that we might be a pillar and ground of truth, holding forth the light of the gospel in this dark world for the glory of Christ. If we cease to do that, this candlestick should, and shall be removed out of its place!

Pray for grace, continual outpourings of grace, that we may be faithful to Christ. At God's appointed time, my work will be done, our labor together will come to an end, and the Lord will take this servant home. When that time comes, you will have to seek another pastor. When you do, be wise and seek the guidance of faithful pastors. And make certain that you...

- Seek the will of God, that he may send you the pastor after his own heart, who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding (Jer. 3:15).
- Look for a man who faithfully and boldly preaches the gospel, one who makes it his business to preach Jesus Christ crucified in all his saving grace and glory all the time.
- Seek a man gifted to serve you, one you are anxious to hear, a man by whom you expect God to speak to your heart.
- And seek a man who has proved himself faithful.

THE SALUTATION

As was his custom, Paul began this Epistle with a gracious salutation. But we should never read these salutations as though they were merely a courteous way of writing a letter. The salutation is just as inspired as the rest of the letter. Let's look at it.

(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.”*

GOD'S MESSENGER

Paul begins this Epistle by identifying himself as a messenger of Jesus Christ. — *“Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God.”* — Paul gives his name and Apostolic authority, to confirm the authenticity of his Epistle. While there are no apostles today, that is to say, there are none who hold the apostolic office, every true gospel preacher is a messenger *“of Jesus Christ by the will of God.”* Paul does not call himself *“the apostle,”* but *“an apostle of Jesus Christ,”* he was just one among many. And every true servant of God recognizes that he is but *“a voice,” “a servant of Jesus Christ,”* just one among many, laboring together for Christ.

Paul did not thrust himself into the office, or seek it in any way. He was *“an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God.”* He declared, *“Necessity is laid upon me, yea woe is unto me if I preach not the gospel.”* His labors, sacrifices, and sufferings were patiently endured because of that necessity. He did not engage in this work that he might obtain a livelihood, or secure an honorable name, but simply because God had called him to the work and put him in it. — *“No man taketh this honor unto himself.”* Yet, he who is called

of God does not shrink from the responsibilities and sacrifices demanded by “*necessity*” God puts upon him.

The church today does not need more preachers. We’ve got too many preachers; but we desperately need some servants of God, some messengers of Jesus Christ, sent by the will of God! We desperately need some men “*called of God*” to preach the everlasting gospel of his free and sovereign grace in Christ, — men constrained by the love of Christ and not by the love of money, — men who labor not for gain, but for the glory of God, — men who do not fleece the sheep, but feed them, — men who are sent into the field, not men who seek the forefront!

A SENT MAN

That man who is called of God to preach the gospel is a man called, gifted, and sent “*by the will of God.*” The man who puts himself into the ministry, who labors from any motive other than the will of God and the glory of God, cannot preach the gospel. He may proclaim truth, but he cannot preach the gospel. He may preach many things pleasing to the ear, but he cannot preach the gospel in the power of God. — “*How can they preach, except they be sent?*” The man who bears God’s message to God’s people must be “*sent*” of him. The prophets of old were sent of God. Those who were not sent of God, had no message from God. The apostles were sent out to preach the gospel of the kingdom, in the power of God, by Christ. By his power and authority, they “*set in the church*” every gift and set the churches in order. Even our Lord Jesus, himself, as “*the Messenger of the Covenant,*” was sent of God. It is to him, as the Lord of the harvest, that we are directed to pray that he will send laborers into his field

A SERVANT

We cannot do better, when we look for an example of a gospel preacher, than the Apostle Paul. Look Romans 1:1, and see another example of the way Paul describes himself, and thus describes all who truly preach the gospel.

(Romans 1:1) “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated unto the gospel of God.”

“*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.*” — **That man who truly preaches the gospel, that man who always preaches the gospel, that man who preaches the whole gospel and that exclusively is a servant of Jesus Christ.** Gospel preachers are the willing, voluntary bond-slaves of the Son of God. Paul did not call himself Rev. Paul, Dr. Paul, Father Paul, or Pope Paul, but “*Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.*” This man counted it his highest honor to be a servant of Christ. He was just one servant among many; but he was a servant.

“*Called to be and apostle (messenger).*” — **Gospel preachers are called and gifted of God to be his messengers, men sent with his message.** A gospel preacher is a man with a message, a message from God, a message burning in his soul, which he must deliver. He is a man with a messianic call, a messianic purpose, and a messianic mandate.

Note: If you ever run across a man with a mandate from God, or a man who even thinks he has a mandate from God, you will not have to wonder about it. You will know it. He will fit no mold, bow to no pressure, surrender no ground, make no compromise. Why should he? He is has a mandate from God! That makes him utterly uncontrollable by anyone, except God who sent him.

- Moses had a mandate from God.
- John the Baptist had a mandate from God.

I will tell you something else about that man who truly preaches the gospel. He is a servant of Jesus Christ, a divinely called messenger of Jesus Christ, and he is “*Separated unto the gospel.*” — **God’s servants, true gospel preachers are men who are separated unto the gospel.** I could spend a good bit of time here. A good bit of time needs to be spent here. God’s servants do not take this business of being God’s servants lightly. They are men separated unto the gospel.

- By God's Decree — (Like Jeremiah and Paul)
- By God's Call
- By God's Gifts
- By God's Placement
- By Their Own, Ever Increasing Devotion and Determination (Rom. 1:9-17)

(Romans 1:9-17) “For **God is my witness**, whom I serve with my spirit in the gospel of his Son, that without ceasing I make mention of you always in my prayers; (10) Making request, **if by any means** now at length I might have a prosperous journey by the will of God to come unto you. (11) For **I long to see you**, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, to the end ye may be established; (12) That is, that I may be comforted together with you by the mutual faith both of you and me. (13) Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that **oftentimes I purposed to come unto you**, (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some fruit among you also, even as among other Gentiles. (14) **I am debtor** both to the Greeks, and to the Barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise. (15) So, as much as in me is, **I am ready to preach the gospel** to you that are **at Rome** also. (16) For **I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation** to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. (17) For **therein is the righteousness of God revealed** from faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.”

That man who preaches the gospel of Christ is like Abraham's servant, who was sent to get a bride for his son Isaac. He will not be distracted from his work by either pleasure or pressure.

One more thing in this regard. God's servants are men who faithfully serve your souls by the will of God (1 Cor. 4:1-2; 2 Cor. 4:1-7).

(1 Corinthians 4:1-2) “Let a man so account of us, as of the ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God. (2) Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”

(2 Corinthians 4:1-7) “Therefore seeing we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we **faint not**; (2) But **have renounced** the hidden things of dishonesty, **not walking in craftiness, nor handling the word of God deceitfully**; but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. (3) But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: (4) In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them. (5) For we **preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord**; and **ourselves your servants** for Jesus' sake. (6) For God, who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts, to *give* the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (7) But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the excellency of the power may be of God, and not of us.”

SAINTS AND FAITHFUL

Go back to 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.*” I admire the way Paul speaks of God's people. **He calls them “saints” because he always looked upon them as God's chosen people, a people separated from the world and made holy by his free grace in Christ, sanctified by his grace.** All who trust Christ have been sanctified in him by...

- God's eternal decree (Jude 1),
- Christ's blood atonement (Heb. 10:14 — “*For by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.*”),
- And by the grace and power of God the Holy Spirit in the new birth (1 Cor. 6:11).

(1 Corinthians 6:9-11) “Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, (10) Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And 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.”

- **Because all who trust Christ are saints, a holy people in him, they are to be looked upon by us as saints**, as those who, being precious and honorable in God’s sight, holy and without blame before him, each esteeming other better than themselves (Phil. 2:3).

(Philippians 2:1-5) “If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, (2) Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. (3) *Let* nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. (4) Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. (5) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”

Then, the inspired apostle addresses God’s saints as those who are “the faithful.” — He thereby makes it clear that he is not addressing just the saints at Ephesus, but all the faithful, wherever they are found. “*The faithful*” are those who have God-given faith in Christ. They trust Christ with all their hearts, to the saving of their souls. The faithful look to him alone for all grace and salvation, venture on him, rely upon him, and trust him for eternal life and salvation. And their faith in Christ makes them faithful and true to him whose name is Faithful and True.

- Faithful to His Cause.
- Faithful to His Gospel.
- Faithful to His Church.
- Faithful to His People.
- Faithful in the Totality of Their Lives.

IN CHRIST

Look at verse 1 again. — “*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.*” All God’s saints are “*in Christ.*” I want to be found in Christ. And I want you to be found in him. The Scriptures speak of us being...

- In Christ by An Eternal Union of Grace
- In Christ by A Vital Union of Faith
- Grafted into Christ

(Philippians 3:8-11) “Yea doubtless, and I count all things *but* loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them *but* dung, that I may win Christ, (9) And be 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: (10) That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; (11) If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

GRACE AND PEACE

In verse 2 God’s messenger expresses the desire of his heart for God’s elect. A faithful pastor’s heart is incessantly anxious for the people trusted to his care, constantly desiring and seeking the everlasting welfare of their souls. As a faithful father seeks the good of his family, the faithful servant of God seeks the good of God’s family, and devotes himself to it. Look at that which Paul here expresses as the desire of his heart for the people of God, whom he dearly loved, and remember that he is writing by the

inspiration of God the Holy Spirit. That means, he is here telling us the incessant desire of God's heart for his people. And God's desire is his determination.

(Ephesians 1:2) "Grace *be* to you, and peace, from God our Father, and *from* the Lord Jesus Christ."

This sentence is an inspired pronouncement of grace and peace upon every believing sinner for time and eternity! Grace shall be the constant gift of God our Father upon us in boundless abundance, and the constant result of that grace shall be ever increasing peace from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Grace is the source and cause of all blessedness, because it is the free, everlasting love and favor of the triune God toward his elect in Christ. The result of that grace, in the experience of it, is peace. When God the Holy Spirit puts the grace of God in us, he gives us faith in and peace from the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our Peace. And with every fresh experience of grace, we are given ever-increasing peace, "*peace that passeth understanding!*".

- Peace in our Consciences by the Blood of Christ.
- Peace in our Hearts by Confidence in Christ.
- Peace with One Another as we are Increasingly United to One Another in Christ.
- And, soon, the Perfect Peace of Eternal Glory!

That is my heart's desire for you. That is what I seek for you in all my labors. — "*Grace and peace from God our Father, and from the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

(Isaiah 3:10) "Say ye to the righteous, that *it shall be well with him*: for they shall eat the fruit of their doings."

(2 Thessalonians 3:3) "But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep *you* from evil."

(2 Thessalonians 3:5) "And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ."

THE MESSAGE

We have seen who God's messenger is. When we get to verse 3, we see his message. That man who is called, gifted, and sent of God to preach the gospel has a message to deliver, a message that burns like fire in his bones, a message he must deliver.

I am not here to give you a lecture in theology, a talk about morality, to share something with you, or to give you something to think about. I am here because I have sought and, I am confident, God has given me a message that you need at this hour, a message found in the first three verses of Ephesians 1, but a message that is as fresh as the morning dew.

Bro. Scott Richardson described preaching better than I have ever heard it described, when he said, "Preaching is getting a message from God's heart to my heart, delivering it to your heart." No man can do that; but if God the Holy Spirit speaks through a man, that is exactly what happens.

The man who is sent of God has a message from God to deliver. The old prophets spoke of it as "*the burden of the word of the Lord.*" In so far as its doctrinal content is concerned, the message is always the same (1 Cor. 2:2; Isa. 40:1-31; 2 Tim. 1:9-11). It is always a message of comfort to the hearts of God's elect.

(Isaiah 40:1-2) "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. (2) Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the Lord's hand double for all her sins."

“What shall I cry?” — Redemption accomplished! — *“All flesh is grass!”* — *“Behold your God!”*

- Omnipotent!
- Holy!
- Sovereign!
- Gracious!

(Isaiah 40:27-31) “Why sayest thou, O Jacob, and speakest, O Israel, My way is hid from the LORD, and my judgment is passed over from my God? (28) Hast thou not known? hast thou not heard, *that* the everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth, fainteth not, neither is weary? *there is* no searching of his understanding. (29) He giveth power to the faint; and to *them that have* no might he increaseth strength. (30) Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: (31) But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew *their* strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.”

(2 Timothy 1:9-11) “Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began, (10) But is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel: (11) Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.”

Now, let’s look at this message as it is set before us in Ephesians 1:3, and I will be done.

(Ephesians 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:”

First, this statement sets before us the deity, the eternal Godhead of our blessed Savior. If the Son is equally to be blessed with the Father, it is because he is equal with the Father and one with him. How precious! He who is our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, is himself God. Take from us this sweet truth, and you take from us the mediatorial office of our Redeemer, and our hope perishes. There is no sweeter portion of divine truth, and no gift so precious as the knowledge that our Savior both is God the eternal Son and our Mediator, Jehovah’s Servant, who said, *“I must work the works of him who sent me.”*

But, **why is God the Father here called “the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”?** He is the Father of Christ, the God-man, our Mediator, who was foreordained before the foundation of the world to his work and office as the Mediator (1 Pet. 1:20), when the Father made the covenant of grace with him, who is the Surety of the covenant.

He is the Father of Christ as both God and man. In his eternal deity our Savior is the Son of God, *“the only-begotten of the Father,”* by glorious and eternal and generation, the eternally begotten Son. As a man, our Savior is that *“holy thing”* that is called the Son of God (Luke 1:32). The Firstborn from the dead is the Firstborn, the Firstborn Son in the family of God.

Second, the apostle calls upon us to bless God. — *“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”* — The word translated *“blessed”* is “eulogized.” It means to speak well of and praise highly. — *“Bless the Lord, O my soul,”* cries the Psalmist, *“and forget not all his benefits.”* Paul is saying, “Speak well of God and praise him highly.” Prayer rises from our sense of need. Praise rises from our sense of God’s boundless goodness and infinite grace.

- The Goodness of His Being
- The Grace He Bestows

Third, this verse declares that blessedness with which the Lord our God has blessed us in Christ. — *“Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ.”*

- The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ “***hath blessed us***,” past tense, all at once, all together, at one time in the eternal past. — We bless God by desiring his praise, honor, and glory. But he has blessed us by commanding blessedness up us.
- He “*hath blessed us **with all spiritual blessings***.” — Those to whom the Almighty gives one spiritual blessing, he has given all spiritual blessings eternally and forever! Those to whom God has given Christ he has given all things in Christ! — All the blessings of grace! — All the blessings of salvation! (Redemption, Adoption, Righteousness, Justification, Regeneration, and Sanctification)— All the blessings of time! — All the blessings of providence! — All the blessings of Heavenly Glory!
- He “*hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings **in heavenly places***.” The word places is in italics because it was added by our translators. Perhaps the word would be best read, “heavenlies,” or “heaven glories,” or “heaven things.”

However it is translated, Paul’s meaning is that God blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heave before the world was made. God our Father, who blessed us is in heaven. Christ our Savior, in whom we are blessed, is in heaven. And all these blessings shall at last bring us to heaven, where we shall forever enjoy them perfectly and fully.

They are spiritual blessings pertaining to heavenly things, absolutely secure, blessings that can never decay or be taken away! This blessedness bestowed upon us originated in heaven and will bring us to heaven. It is a blessedness that makes us fit for heaven.

- He “*hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places **in Christ***.”

What bless words those are — “*in Christ!*” **Everything is in Christ. If we have not yet learned that Jesus Christ and him crucified is the foundation, essence, and fulness of all divine truth, if we have not yet learned that the message of the Bible and the hope of the gospel is Christ and him crucified, then we have read the Word of God with no profit to our souls, our religion is a vain show, and we are yet without hope before God!** — What knowledge we have of this Sacred Book will only add to our condemnation in the Day of Judgment! – Without Christ and him crucified our religion is like...

- The Heavens without a Sun,
- A Lamp without Light,
- A Clock without Hands,
- A Compass without a Needle!

Without Christ and him crucified we have no forgiveness of sin, — no comfort in trouble, — no strength in trial, — no atonement, peace, or reconciliation with God, — no hope in death, — no access to God, — no door of entrance into heaven!

Do you understand this? “*Christ is all!*” **Without Christ we are nothing, we have nothing, we can do nothing** (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

(1 Corinthians 1:30-31) “But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption: (31) That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

All that God has for guilty sinners is in Christ, only in Christ (Col. 2:9-10; John 3:35-36).

(John 3:35-36) “The Father loveth the Son, and hath given all things into his hand. (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.”

(Colossians 2:9-10) "For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. (10) And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:"

The love of God is in Christ. The mercy of God is in Christ. The grace of God is in Christ. Without Christ there is no mercy, love and grace, but only wrath, judgment, and condemnation.

- When the flood came, there was no mercy and deliverance anywhere, but in the ark. – That ark was Christ!
- When the man-slayer fled from the avenger of blood, he found no safety until he entered the city of refuge. – That City of Refuge was Christ!^[1]
- God said to Israel, "*I will meet with thee (upon) the mercy-seat, between the two cherubim*" (Ex. 25:22). – Christ is our Mercy-Seat. God meets sinners nowhere else but in Christ!

Among the untold millions of the redeemed in heaven, there shall not be found a single voice that shall not sing the praises of Christ, the Lamb of God. **Yonder in Glory Land Christ alone is praised.** There ransomed sinners sing, "*Thou art worthy, for thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood*" (Rev. 5:9). To him alone every knee shall bow. To him every tongue shall confess!

Every blessing of life and grace is ours only in Christ. In this first chapter of Paul's letter to the Ephesians, he uses the words "*in Christ,*" or their equivalent, fourteen times. He means for us to understand that all grace, all salvation, all blessedness is "*in Christ.*" All that the triune God has done for us, all that he gives to sinners, and all that he requires of sinners is in Christ!

- All spiritual blessings are in Christ.
- All covenant mercies are in Christ.
- Election is in Christ.
- Predestination is in Christ.
- Adoption is in Christ.
- Redemption is in Christ.
- Forgiveness is in Christ.
- Acceptance is in Christ.
- Truth and knowledge are in Christ.
- The eternal inheritance of God's saints is in Christ.
- An I am in Christ!

"In the Beloved" accepted am I,
Risen, ascended, and seated on high.
Saved from all sin through His infinite grace,
With the redeemed ones accorded a place.

"In the Beloved" – How safe my retreat!
"In the Beloved" – Accounted complete!
Who can condemn me? In Him I am free!
Savior and Keeper forever is He!

"In the Beloved" I went to the tree,
There in His person, by faith I now see
Infinite wrath rolling over His head,
Infinite grace, for He died in my stead!

"In the Beloved" – God's marvelous grace
Calls me to dwell in this wonderful place!
God sees my Savior, and then He sees me,
"In the Beloved" accepted and free!

All blessedness is in Christ. All the blessings wherewith God blessed us were conferred upon us in Christ. He, by his merit, purchased them for us as the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. He, as our

Head and Advocate, as our Mediator and Surety, as our Representative and Forerunner, has received them in our name. And, by virtue of our union with him, we have them by right!

Behold the transcendent bounty and liberality of our heavenly Father. He has more than one blessing for his children, he has all spiritual and heavenly blessings for them, grace on earth, and glory in heaven; grace to enable us to glorify him upon earth, and glory as the reward of grace with himself in heaven!

CHRIST THE BLESSING

All blessings are in Christ. But that is not all. **Christ is the Blessing!** Where Christ is not, there is no blessedness, but only cursedness. — “*Men shall be blessed in him.*” I see Christ’s hand and Christ’s blessing in the mercy he bestows upon me. But this makes the blessing sweetest. — Christ himself is the Blessing!

- Christ gives me light, and he is my Light.
- He gives me life, and he is my Life!
- Christ gives me salvation. That is wonderful; but this is better. — Christ is my Salvation!

In Psalm 1, when David speaks of our Savior, he says, “*Blessed is the man.*” But really, that sentence should be translated, “Blessedness is the man!” And the word “*blessed,*” or “blessedness” is in the plural — “blessednesses.” It seems that David was saying the same thing there that Paul is saying in Ephesians 1:3. — Christ is all blessedness and all blessings are in him. He is not one blessing among many, but all blessings in one! The blessedness that was bestowed upon us in him before the world was is not one thing, but in all.

“*The LORD is my portion, saith my soul; therefore will I hope in him*” (Lam. 3:24). This is our lot and portion forever! Rejoice! Eternally “*blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ!*”

Amen.

[\[1\]](#) When the man-slayer fled for refuge, he found no safety until he was in the city. He might know everything there was to know about the city (Its size, -- Its gates, -- Its walls, -- Its beauty), but he was not safe until he was in the city. – Now hear me well. – You may know everything there is to know about Christ, -- you may know about him, his Person, his work, his doctrine, you may even fight for and defend these things, but no blessing of grace is yours until you are found in Christ by faith!