

**21.01.07 Coromandel Baptist 10:00 a.m.**

***Lavish Grace***

Bible Readings = Eph. 1:7-12; Rom. 5:1-11

**Introduction:**

- (1) Last week, we saw how the Father has purposed that we would be redeemed to the praise of the glory of his grace, and this was all in the Son by the Spirit.
- (2) The important phrase that we saw last week, and which will recur throughout this series, *in Christ*.
- (3) All we have, and are, and will be, is in him. The Father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing (every blessing in the Spirit) in Christ, and seated us with him in the heavenly places: which is where we know the blessing and battle of life in the Spirit.
- (4) Ephesians tells us that we need to see all things from the perspective of the resurrection and ascension. From there we see things as they really are, not things as they seem.

***This week we hope to see the sheer lavishness of the grace of God, who has given us Christ (in whom all things are gathered up and united) and is so doing has secured our inheritance in him.***

**1. The Overall Pattern of These Verses**

(1) In view of the length and structure of the paragraph, it would be good to set out the main components in relation to each other. Standing as the banner headline over the whole, is *Blessed with Every Spiritual Blessing in the Beloved*.

- This is all according to the Father's will and his initiative. If we were to remove the initiative and action of God from the picture we would have nothing!

(2) The key phrase is *in him*, i.e. in the Son.

- Redemption through his blood
  - The forgiveness of our sins
- Revelation of God's wisdom and eternal purpose, the 'mystery' held until the coming of Christ
  - Which is that all things will be headed up in the Son.
- Inheritance (and that we are God's inheritance), predestined according to God's will
  - Hope
- That we might be to the praise of his glory.

(3) All these themes/realities are issues that recur at various places in the letter, so we will not deal with all of them now.

- We will come back and forth to the part of Ephesians as we go through the book, since Eph. 1:1-14 is the great theological and pastoral synopsis (summary) of the whole.

(4) What we must see is that all these great things, granted to us in Christ, are our experience of the grace of God which he has *lavished* on us (v. 7b, 8a)

- 'lavished' is a generous word! In the Gk lexicons the word means to abound; to overflow; to have in abundance; to be over and above (e.g. the same root word in

Eph. 3:20); to surpass. “Lavish” today has similar synonyms: generous; abundant; copious; bounteous; sumptuous.

- Do we really believe that this is the way God is towards us? The principle of law-way is so deeply ingrained in us, it is impossible, to receive it. The Flesh cannot and does not love like this!
- It is the word used in a variety of familiar contexts e.g. in the feedings of the multitudes to describe the overflow of the provision (Matt. 14:20; 15:37 and parallel passages). Also see Rom. 5:15 But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through one man's trespass, much more have the grace of God and the free gift by the grace of that one man Jesus Christ *abounded* for many and then Rom. 5:20 Now the law came in to increase the trespass, but where sin increased, *grace abounded* all the more Which is parallel to Rom. 5:21 so that, as sin reigned in death, *grace also might reign through righteousness* leading to eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord
  - And also in other passages e.g. 2 Cor. 1:5 For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too. 2 Cor. 9:8 And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work 2 Cor. 9:12 or the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many thanksgivings to God
- Lavishness is a word that is not much used today, not least by believers! Perhaps we are a bit suspicious of lavishness. Perhaps too attuned to a spirit of asceticism, and abstemiousness?
  - We might be more at home in lavish displays of affection...but then we see that we love the person we love because there is something appealing to us in them.
- God's lavishness is lavish!! But it is lavish to those who are 'dead in trespasses and sins'. This is lavishness that we do not understand: it is the *lavishness of grace*. And he deals with us according to the riches of his grace (v. 7b)
  - This means that he does not give to us *out of* some of his riches, but deals with us, and gives to us, *according to the magnitude* of his own richness.  
§ Mark 12:41-43. God gives all he can give!

## 2. Lavish Grace Expressed in Christ:

(1) As the one in whom we are redeemed from our sins: this is through his blood.

- Old Testament background of redemption is that of deliverance, or releasing from slavery or debt by purchase.
- Here, the redemption is parallel to 'the forgiveness of our trespasses'
  - There is no redemption in Christ if there is no forgiveness of sins. John 8:34 means that we are all enslaved, and therefore need a redeemer. But he could not redeem without dealing with our sins! He is the Lamb of God who takes them away (Passover Lamb). This is the basis of the New Covenant, formed in his blood.  
§ Definition of forgiveness (R. W. Dale, *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, p. 67) "Forgiveness may be defined: (1) In *personal* terms – as a cessation of the anger or moral resentment of God against sin. (2) In *ethical* terms – as a release from the guilt of sin,

which oppresses the conscience. (3) In *legal* terms – as a remission of the punishment of sin, which is eternal death.”

(2) As the one in whom we see the will of God revealed.

- This is spoken of in terms of the *mystery* of his will. This a term we will come back to later, but it is the revelation of something we would not ever come to know (e.g. in Rev. 17:5ff.), and is an important theme in Ephesians (3:3-9; 5:32; 6:19) and elsewhere (e.g. Rom. 16:25; Col. 1:26-27; 2:2; 4:3; etc.).
  - Sin obscures the light, and we cannot see things clearly, if at all. But also the idea of ‘mystery’ is linked to God’s unfolding of his plan and purpose over the generations of his people and the particular events and revelations he gives. To understand the mystery of his will revealed in Christ we need to have spiritual *wisdom and insight*, but these are freely granted to us in Christ!!

§ What we must not lose sight of is that what we have in Christ, and what we are reading even here in these verses, transcends the revelation of the prophets. See 1 Pet. 1:10-12 cf. Matt. 11:10-15.

(3) As the one in whom all things will come to their summation.

- The translations handle v.10 differently e.g. ‘gather together into one’; ‘unite all things’; ‘sum up all things’; ‘head up all things’; ‘having all things together under on head’.
  - It is the same word used in Rom. 13:9 The commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, *are summed up* in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."
  - The best definition is ‘bring everything together in a unifying principle or person’.
- This is what all our political leaders try to do. Compare with the history of empire and domination (e.g. Rome). From another angle, this is also what America is trying to do in Iraq. Problem of insurgency!
  - All things will acknowledge his headship. It is already real (as in Eph. 1:20ff.) and it is acknowledged by the Church, but then all things will be summed up: as in Phil. 2:1-11.
  - All discordant elements will be finally removed.

(4) As the ground of our hope.

- Cannot read the Scriptures without being thrust forward to look for the coming day! True of both testaments, but gloriously prominent in the New Testament, where we are urged repeatedly to look to the coming day of the Son of Man.
  - The hope is the revelation of all that we are and have, and all that the Son will finally complete on the last day. We have been predestined to adoption (Eph. 1:5), and this has both been fulfilled (a la Gal. 4:1-6), and is yet to be completed (as in Rom. 8:23, where the adoption as sons = the redemption of our bodies).
    - § One of the great marks of that adoption is free access to the Father, of which Paul says much more, later in Ephesians. *Now* we have it (as in the parallel reading of Rom. 5), but *then* we will have it without contest and strife. No insurgency!
- In this we are to be to the praise of His glory.

- Not simply 'praise his glory', but 'be to the praise of his glory'...our very existence as the sons of God secured by the action of the Father in the Son by the Spirit will attest to the praise of his glory. We will also *be fully congruent* with that glory!