

WHO HATH BLESSED US WITH ALL SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

TEXT: EPH. 1:1-5

Introduction:

1. Tonight we will begin a new series on the book of Ephesians. The author is the apostle Paul (1:1). The date was about AD 64 (Scofield).
2. It was written from Rome while Paul was imprisoned, and is the first of his four “Prison Epistles,” the others being Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon.
3. It was delivered to the church at Ephesus by Tychicus (Eph. 6:21).
4. Merrill Unger says that Ephesians is “perhaps the sublimest of all the Pauline epistles.” Scofield says “it contains the highest church truth.”
5. Ephesus was the principle city of Asia Minor, and probably of the entire eastern section of the Roman Empire. It was one of the great cities of the world in Paul’s day.
6. The temple of Diana in Ephesus was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world. It was the largest Greek temple ever constructed.
7. The city of Ephesus was destroyed by the Goths in AD 262, and never again rose to its former glory. Today it is a small town in Turkey called Ayasaluk.
8. The apostle Paul had an exciting and fruitful ministry in the city of Ephesus (cf. I Cor. 16:8, 9).
9. Ephesus was a wicked city. In Shakespeare’s *Comedy of Errors*, Antipholus says this about Ephesus:
“They say this town is full of cozenage,
As, nimble jugglers that deceive the eye,
Dark-working sorcerers that change the mind,
Soul-killing witches that deform the body,
Disguised cheaters, prating mountebanks,
And many such-like liberties of sin.”
10. Paul’s “adversaries” (I Cor. 16:9) did not want to see people saved because it was bad for their wicked business (Acts 19; esp. vss. 23-41).
11. When Paul departed from Ephesus, he warned them that “grievous wolves” would enter in to the congregation (Acts 20:29-31).
12. Years later, our Lord commended the church at Ephesus for keeping these “wolves” (false teachers) out of the church (Rev. 2:2). However, our Lord reproved them by saying, “thou hast left thy first love” (Rev. 2:4). Interestingly, “love” is mentioned nine times in Paul’s epistle to the Ephesians, more than anywhere else in his letters. The letter begins with love and ends with love (1:4; 6:23, 24).
13. The three key words in the epistle are *sitting*, *walking*, and *standing*. Because of our position in Christ, we are seated with Him in heavenly places (2:6). Our

duty and responsibility as Christians is to “walk worthy” of our vocation. This walk includes warfare with the devil and the demonic realm (6:11-17).

14. “Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” (Eph. 6:11).

15. Paul starts out by saying, “**Blessed** be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath **blessed** us with all spiritual **blessings** in heavenly places in Christ” (Eph. 1:3).

16. Tonight, let us count our **blessings**.

I. THE SOURCE OF OUR BLESSINGS

II. THE SPHERE OF OUR BLESSINGS

III. THE SCOPE OF OUR BLESSINGS

I. THE SOURCE OF OUR BLESSINGS (1:3a).

1. Obviously the source of all blessings, both spiritual and material, is God (1:3).

2. “Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenlies in Christ.”

3. It might not be noticeable in our English translation, but Eph. 1:3-14 is really one long sentence. It is a doxology of praise – “to the praise of the glory of His grace” (1:6, 12, 14).

4. We will not be able to do more than scratch the surface tonight, but I would like for us to consider the many blessings bestowed upon us by our gracious God.

5. Some churches emphasize a “second blessing.” But the Bible teaches that there are much more than that – “who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings.”

6. God is here referred to as the “Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1:3). This concept of God is not taught in the O.T. There He is revealed as the Creator, *Elohim*; as the God of the covenant, *Jehovah*; as the Lord, *Adonai*; as *El*, the Almighty; as *El Shaddai*, the gracious giver (“God will provide”), and many other names, but not as the Father of the Messiah.

7. It was not until our Lord came that God was revealed as Father. “And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? Wist ye not that I must be about my Father’s business?” (Luke 2:49).

8. JW’s argue much about the proper name of God, but “Father” is the name given God in the NT (cf. Matt. 6:8, 9, 14, 15, 18 etc.).

9. We have no greater example than our Lord Himself. In Matthew 26:39, our Lord prayed, “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

10. As He hung on the cross, He prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do” (Luke 23:34).

11. And then shortly afterwards, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit” (Luke 23:46).

12. After our Lord rose from the dead, He said to His disciples, “And, behold, I send the promise of my Father upon you: but tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem, until ye be endued with power from on high” (Luke 24:49).

13. The only way to know God the Father is through God the Son (John 14:6).

14. The hymnwriter put it this way, “O come to the Father, through Jesus the Son, And give Him the glory, great things He has done” (Fanny Crosby).

II. THE SPHERE OF OUR BLESSINGS (1:3b; cf. 2:6).

1. The sphere of our blessings is “in heavenly places (literally “in the heavenlies”) in Christ” (1:3). Because our sphere of blessing is in heaven, we are strangers and pilgrims here on this earth.
2. “We are not as yet in heavenly places but in earthly places, though we may and ought to be in heavenly *states* of mind, heart, and experience... While yet in the body and on earth, the mind and heart may be in heaven; we ought to be essentially living on a higher, celestial level. This is the grand possibility and privilege to which the Holy Spirit turns our eyes” (AT Pierson).
3. “If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory” (Col. 3:1-4).
4. Many Bible teachers have pointed out the similarities between the book of Joshua and the epistle to the Ephesians (cf. Scofield, Introduction, p. 1249).
5. Ephesians is the NT counterpart of the book of Joshua. Just as Israel’s blessings were found in Canaan, the promised land, so ours are found in the “heavenly places.”

6. Just as the Israelites had to battle many enemies in Canaan in order to possess all that God had promised them, so we have to battle Satan and his army in order to enter into all that is ours in heavenly places.
7. Just as Israel's inheritance in Canaan was fiercely contested by their enemies, so our inheritance in the heavenlies is also strongly contested (cf. 6:12).
8. Just as Joshua led the Israelites into victory, the Lord Jesus Christ leads us (cf. 6:10).
9. Our sphere of blessing is not just "in heavenly places," but also "in Christ" (1:3). This phrase "in Christ" is found often in the epistle (cf. 1:1, 10, 20; 2:6, etc.). This phrase denotes privilege and security (cf. 1:13). It is only in Christ that we ever could have received these many blessings.

III. THE SCOPE OF OUR BLESSINGS (1:4, 5).

1. We have been "chosen" in Him "before the foundation of the world" (1:4). The time of our election was "before the foundation of the world." The purpose of our election was "that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love" (1:4).
 2. God knew from all eternity who would believe (I Peter 1:2), and provided a means whereby all our sin and iniquity could be settled for, in order that we might be presented holy and without blame before Him.
3. That is why our Lord is referred to as "the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world" (Rev. 13:8).
4. So the purpose of our election is "that we should be holy." Holiness of life is only made perfect in and through love (1:4b; cf. I Thess. 3:12, 13). Holiness without love can be harsh, and love without holiness can be worldly.
5. Those that are saved are "predestinated" (1:5). In the Bible, predestination is always used in reference to God's children, never to lost sinners.

6. Romans 8:29 says, “For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren” (cf. Eph. 1:4).
7. Nowhere in the Bible is it said that God predestinates unsaved people to hell.
8. Election is “according to the good pleasure of His will” (Eph. 1:5). It is not the good pleasure of God’s will to send people to hell (II Peter 3:9).

CONCLUSION:

1. In 1808, they threw a big birthday party for Haydn, the great Austrian composer, on the occasion of his 76th birthday. His famous composition, *The Creation*, was performed in a music hall in Vienna by a group of celebrated singers and musicians.
2. Mr. Haydn was carried into the music hall in an armchair. It was his last public appearance. He was in frail health and would be dead in less than a year.
3. Beethoven, who had been a former student, knelt down and kissed his hands. As the performance proceeded, audience enthusiasm gradually increased until, with a final burst of music at the passage, “And there was light,” the people rose to pay tribute to the great composer.
4. Haydn struggled to his feet and motioned for silence. Then he lifted his hand toward heaven and cried out, “No! No! Not to me, but to God be the glory.”
5. Then he fell back into his chair exhausted. This is how it must be. “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (1:3)... “to the praise of His glory” (1:12).