

Living a Life of Blessings Part 1

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Lord's Day morning

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*"

edv yev krtbum uru lwan lgrh n vprv

Introduction: Open your Bibles to Paul's letter to the Ephesians. We will be covering the nature of the blessings we have in Christ, so the title of this morning's message is "Living a Life of Blessings." We will be dealing specifically with verse 3 today. Let us stand together as we read the first 14 verses of chapter 1.

[Read Ephesians 1:1-14]

When we come to the third verse of Ephesians chapter one, we come to what is one long continuous sentence in the Greek. In our King James translation, verses 3 through 14 are stretched out over several sentences (four to be exact!), but when Paul wrote this, it was one sentence of over 200 Greek words! Paul is brimming over with powerful words in trying to describe all the spiritual blessings we have in Christ, and it is as if he almost gets lost in his praise. Each word is bursting with meaning, and it is all one long continuous thought. What it is is a doxology—Paul here begins a song of praise to God. This song is easily divided into three parts. It looks back at eternity past, and thanks God for election. It looks at salvation present, and thanks God for redemption. It looks at the eternity that lies ahead, and thanks God for our glorification—our inheritance that will never fade away. What also makes these verses so profound is that we see each Person in the Godhead and their part in our salvation.

- The Father planned our salvation and *selected* us before the *foundation* of the world
- The Son entered time and space and *saved* us *out* of the world
- The Spirit has come to live in our hearts and *sealed* us so that we might live holy lives *in* this "present evil world"

So these 11 verses are all one long word of praise!

Where does this praise come from? It's interesting, because verses 1 and 2 are quite doctrinal. Back in verse 1 we've learned what it means to be a Christian—it means like *Paul*, you're called out of this world *by the will of God*; it means you're a *saint*, it means that you're *faithful*, it means that you are *in Christ Jesus*. God has taken you out of this world, He's granted you faith, and you've believed on Christ. And at that very moment He joined with the Lord—made one with Him. You are in Christ Jesus. That is what constitutes a Christian. That's what it means to be saved.

Verse 2 answers the question: how did this happen? This all took place because God in His *grace* reconciled us to Himself and we are no longer at war with God, but we have by Christ's lifeblood an eternal declaration of *peace* with God.

This is doctrine that fills our hearts with praise! So after the *doctrine* of verses 1 and 2, we see nothing but *doxology*. Doxology is our response to doctrine!

This is an important point: you and I have not truly understood *doctrine*, until it results in *doxology*!

We haven't really understood doctrine if our hearts are not filled with thanks and blessing to God. Doctrine rightly understood always results in praise. In previous weeks, we've learned that a Christian is marked by praise on his lips and wonder in his heart. He is impressed with God!

If a church is being founded on right doctrine, you will be able to tell it, because it's full of joy; it's full of thanksgiving and gratefulness. The blessings of Christ are evident in every heart and on everyone's tongue. We ought to be a happy people to be around. Should there be any more joyful people on the face of the earth than God's people? Because we are truly blessed in Christ!

This morning I want us to look at verse three, and we will see that God has brought us into a position of blessing. If there was just one word with which to sum up this verse, it would be the word "blessing." What has God done for you in saving you? He has blessed you—beyond your full understanding and beyond what your imagination can even dream. He has *blessed us* abundantly with *all blessings*!

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

You cannot miss that this is a verse all about blessing! We see the Blessed One, the Blesser, the ones who are blessed, and the blessings.

So let us look at these blessings in our text once again:

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*"

- I. First, we notice the Strategist (or, the Sovereign) of the blessings: "*God...hath blessed us*"
 - A. It was God's Design to bless us. Those who are in Christ Jesus have lives filled with God's blessings, with all the good gifts from God. We are blessed, are we not today? Look at us here this morning! If there is anything good in your life, God alone produced it! God's blessings come from His sovereign hand! *He is the Strategist, the Designer, and the Engineer of our Salvation!* All that is good about our life, our past, our present, our future—we can attribute it all to God! We cannot add anything good to God's design for our lives. You ought not be seeking anything else but His blessing! He is the One Who blesses. Anything

outside of Him is a curse. Go ahead and add something to your life that you really want—go ahead and get it without God’s approval. It will curse you! Paul tells us that all the blessings of life come from God!! They’re not from Ebay; they’re not from your portfolio. You’re not gonna find anything of lasting value at Wal-Mart or Target. It’s all gonna pass away! All that is good in life—all that is worthwhile and worth something—we find it in one place—in one Person. We find all these blessings in God. So it is God’s DESIGN to bless us.

- B. But we see also, that God Delights in blessing us. He is eternally happy in all that He does. It was His will before the foundation of the world to bless the ungodly with the substitutionary atonement of Christ. That was God’s plan, and He is infinitely happy in it. His plans are never frustrated. We read in verse 4 that God has decreed your blessing. You see, God would not be eternally happy if all that He has willed did not come to pass.¹ It is His delight to bless you. It is His pleasure! You are blessed today because God delights in blessing you. There is no other explanation for our joy here this morning. God wants you to be blessed, and you will be blessed, otherwise God would be unhappy, and that is impossible. God is not the ever-miserable God, but the ever blessed God—He is always happy in all that He does, and not one of his plans is frustrated.

Paul calls Him the “blessed God” in 1 Timothy 1:11, and again says He is “the Creator, who is blessed for ever” in Romans 1:25.

Paul constantly reminds us that God acts “according to His pleasure” and indeed “Whatsoever the LORD pleases, *that* he does in heaven, and in earth, in the seas, and all deep places” (Psalm 135:6).

Do you see that it is God who blesses us, and He delights in doing so?

- C. And thirdly, we must realize that we are utterly Dependent upon God for any blessing. We cannot bless ourselves! God blesses us because He is the source of all blessing, of every good thing. Anything that is good comes from God alone because there is no source of goodness outside of God.² Who do we think we are? Do we find our blessings in the world? Do we try to steal a pleasure from the television? Why should we seek our blessings from BestBuy or from the praise of others? We must come to realization that our blessings, or happiness, our well-being do not depend on our selves or what other people or things can give us! We are totally and utterly dependent on God for anything good in our lives.

We can sing with full hearts the doxology:
Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

We must depend on God if we will have truly happy lives! It all comes from Him! Happiness outside of Him is illegitimate. Happiness outside of Him will fade, but happiness in Christ will never fade away. We cannot manufacture it ourselves.

¹ C. Matthew McMahon. *The Two Wills of God*, (Puritan Publications: New Lenox, IL, 2005), 439.

² John MacArthur. *Ephesians: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Moody: Chicago, 1986), 8.

James 1:17

“Every good gift and every perfect gift is from *above*,”—you’ll not find it on this earth! You see, it comes “down from the Father of lights in whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.”

Go ahead—tell me you’re not blessed in God today. Tell me that what He has given you today is not blessing. Go ahead—tell me the appliances in your house are no longer functioning. Tell me how perilous the job market and the economy are. Tell me how your life is not the same because someone you love is no longer with you. Tell me how hard life is. I won’t disagree with you. Life is hard. But if you are looking to health and comfort and loved ones for your blessings, then you need to stop depending on those things for your happiness. You need to love God and depend on Him for all your blessings, and...

Romans 8:28

...we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to *his* purpose.

We are dependent on God to bless us! He delights in blessing us. Our being blessed is His design!

II. Now let us see the Scope of the blessings:

This verse says that “God...blessed us”

- A. These blessings are Accomplished. We need to look at the “grammar of the Gospel” here. This verse does not say that God blesses us, but that he “hath blessed us.” The idea is that it is already fulfilled—it is accomplished. It is a moment, an event, a point on the horizon line of history. It’s already taken place. All that we need in this life, we will find in what Christ has already given us in our salvation. He is all we need for the here and the now. It’s all accomplished. Everything we need to live was given to us when God called us to faith in Christ. It’s done!

2 Peter 1:3 tells us that God’s “divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness.” It is not that God *will* give us “all things pertaining to life and godliness,” but that he has *already* given them to us. God has already blessed us with “all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.” Our resources in God are not simply *promised*; but they are in actuality already *possessed*! So, God cannot give us more than His Son. Are you saved? Is the Son of God your all? You don’t need to receive something more, but you need to do more with what you already have!³

So, why is it that we find ourselves constantly asking God for what He has already given us?

1. When we ask for comfort, we ought to seek the comfort that is already ours in Christ.

³ *Ibid.*, 8.

2. When we ask for health, we ought to thank God that we already have what we've asked for, for "by His stripes we are healed."
3. When we ask for a job, we need to remember that God has already given us a job description—we are ambassadors for Christ where ever we are!
4. When we ask for our daily bread, we need to hear the Lord saying to us "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God."

Turn over to Colossians 2:9-10. I want you to see that we already have all we need because we have Christ. We lack nothing. We read, "[I]n [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily..." and what does it say? I want you to underline these words. It says that we are: "complete in Him."

All we need, all we are, all of our blessings are already accomplished in Christ. We are complete in Christ. Our heavenly position and possession are so secure and settled that Paul tells us that it's as if we're already reigning with Christ in heaven! Ephesians 2:6 says that God has "raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus." From God's perspective, our salvation is accomplished, and God is a God and Father to us here and now—we need not look to anyone else. God has blessed us with Himself. He cannot give us more than infinity. We just need to do something more with what He's already given to us.

But not only are the blessings already accomplished, we see that...

- B. The blessings are All-encompassing. God has blessed us "with ALL spiritual blessings." So we have to ask ourselves the question—how are we blessed with ALL spiritual blessings? How far do these blessings go? Paul in the rest of this chapter gives a survey of the multitude of blessings we have—and we have all of them: election, adoption, redemption, sanctification, forgiveness, and resurrection in Christ—if you get a hold of these blessings, they'll change your life!! And no blessing is left out—all that God has promised has been secured by Christ, so that at this moment we have all we need to be all that Christ wants us to be!

There are no excuses we can make, because these blessings do not depend on this world. They surpass this world. You say, "But I can't be patient!" No, I'm not asking you to be patient! I'm asking you to die, and let the Holy Spirit of God take control of you, because in Christ, you have the blessing of long suffering and self-control. You may not love you spouse the way you ought to. I'm asking you to let go of your false ideas and dreams, and let the blessing of the love of Christ take hold of you. We need to let go of the flimsy goodies of this world and expose them for what they are: shallow, hallow, empty, and disappointing. The blessings of this world are like cotton candy—in a moment they're gone. And though they look good, they leave you feeling sick and messy and unfulfilled!

A Christian is a child of God and a joint heir with Jesus Christ. Christ owns the world, and the Christian will "inherit the earth." Christ rules the

world, and the believer reigns with Him. We may be poor, but in Christ we are rich! We may be weak, but in Christ we have all power, we can do all things through Him Who strengthens us!

Perhaps you are a believer today, and you are waiting for God to do something great in your life. Are you saved? Then you have all the blessings you need. When you as a believer begin to comprehend these blessings you will begin to understand the position and the possessions you already have in Christ. When you begin to grasp who you and what you have in Christ, then you'll reach a point in your heart and life where you are content in Christ—where you realize that He is all you really need. In Him we have ALL spiritual blessings!

So now we have seen the blessings were given by God, and these blessings in Christ are vested with everything we could ever need to be all that God wants us to be. So we've seen the Strategist and the Scope of our blessings.

III. Now thirdly, let us see the Supplier of the blessings:

"God... hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ"

- A. The Holy Spirit produces these blessings. The word "spiritual" here ~~only~~ (*pneumatikos—Noo-MOT-i-kas*) does not mean that these blessings are spiritual in the sense of being immaterial. This word entails so much more than that! When the Scripture here speaks of "spiritual" blessings, it has the idea of being "produced by or belonging to the Holy Spirit"⁴ This word in every context, wherever it is found in the New Testament, *always* refers to the divine working of the Spirit of God. So, these blessings are spiritual because they are "derived from the Holy Spirit, whose presence and influence is the very blessing that has been purchased by Christ."⁵

Christianity takes place in the realm and dominion of God's Spirit, and since all the blessings and graces of the Christian life and all Christian disciplines are reflections of God's Spirit, they are all named 'spiritual' in this verse after Him.⁶ They are "spiritual" or "Holy Spirit" blessings.

So that brings us to a Scriptural and, I might add, *logical* deduction!

- B. The Christian partakes of these blessings in direct proportion to His relation to the Spirit of God.
1. A non-Christian has no claim to these blessings in Christ. Romans 8: 9 tells us that Christians are "not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if...the Spirit of God dwell[s] in [them]." He goes on to say that "if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." A person who is not a Christian is not owned by the Spirit of God. So today, if you are here without Christ, seeking the

⁴ Eadie. *Greek Text of Ephesians*, 14. He goes on to say that the Syriac version reads "of the Spirit," that is, "blessings of or pertaining to the Holy Spirit."

⁵ Charles Hodge. *Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians* (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 1994), 28.

⁶ Eadie. *Ephesians*, 14.

benefits of the world, and coming up empty, disillusioned, and without hope, then you need to turn to Christ!

Perhaps you are a believer, and yet your eyes are closed to the blessings that are in Christ. You burdened down with this world and you are being overtaken in a fault. You know the love of Christ, but you are not experiencing the power of a life dominated by the Holy Spirit. Could your life be described as being “dominated by the Holy Spirit?”

2. A Christian who is not under the control of the Spirit has no capacity of living life in the Spirit! What we as believers need is the continual manifestation of the Spirit of God in our lives. We don't need to know more theories about the Holy Spirit—we don't need to know how to list all the gifts of the Spirit or know even which ones we have. What we need is the Spirit's operation in our lives!! The Holy Spirit makes men aware of and sure of the reality of Jesus—the Living Christ!⁷

1 John 2:20, 27 tell us that we have...

“... an unction from the Holy One, and [we] know all things...But the anointing which [we] have received of him abideth in [us], and [we] need not that any man teach [us]: but...the same anointing teacheth [us] of all things, and is truth...”

Many qualified people are not saying enough about the Holy Spirit. We fundamentalist Baptists are afraid to speak of Him. We need to not just talk of Him, but experience Him in our lives. And yet many unqualified people are saying too much about Him and often saying inaccurate things which sometimes lead to fanaticism and hypocrisy. Let the fanatics say what they want to say—it will not deter me from preaching the truth. What is clear in this passage and throughout the Word of God is that nothing is more important in the Christian life than for the Christian to be under the control and domination of the Spirit of Christ. When Paul says we are to be “filled” with the Holy Spirit, he is saying that we are to be nothing less than dominated by Him!!

This church will not do anything of lasting significance if we do not each one of us put ourselves under the daily control of Christ's Spirit. This is no second blessing or some mystical experience. This is an utter submission of the mind, will, emotions, and life to the Person of the Spirit. How we need this today!!

Galatians 5:16

This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Ephesians 5:18

And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit.

⁷ Ernest Reisinger. *The Church's Greatest Need*, pamphlet put out by Chapel Library, Pensacola, FL.

Are you walking in the Spirit at this moment? What is controlling your life? All the blessings that Christ has for you are not experienced unless you are dying to self and walking in the Spirit! Are you an obedient Christian today?

Conclusion/Appeal: Let's stand together. Is your life controlled by the blessings you have in Christ, or are you going after the flimsy, empty, disappointing pleasures of the world? Are you living a holy life dominated by the Holy Spirit?

Perhaps you're here today, and your life is not dominated by the Spirit of God because you've never trusted in Christ. You need to turn from your sins—quit living the life you're living, and embrace Christ—take yourself off the throne of your heart and let Christ be the King of your life. That is salvation. Is Jesus your Saviour today? If He is Saviour then He will also be Lord. You say, "I want to repent and put my faith in Christ today." Will you raise your hand so that I can pray for you?

Perhaps you are a Christian, and your life is dominated by this world. God is not sovereign in your life. The world's delights please you most of the time. You say, "I'm tired of living for the pleasures of this world—I want Christ to dominate me." Or perhaps you've forgotten that Christ is all you need. He's already given you everything you need for life and godliness. You say, pray for me, Pastor. I've been trying to figure out a solution, and I just need to realize that Christ is all I need. Will you raise your hand today so that I can pray for you?

The front of the church is open. Come now and give your burden to the Lord. If you need someone to pray with you, a brother or sister is waiting and ready to do that.

Let us pray.

Closing Hymn: 400 Take My Life and Let it Be