

Every Spiritual Blessing in Christ (Discussion-Review)

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Preacher: Bill Story

[0:00] I want to thank John and Karen for stepping in, providing beautiful music.

! We haven't heard a flute for a while.! That's really sweet.

Open your Bibles with me please to the book of Ephesians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, or Gentiles eat pork chops.

Gentiles eat pork chops. G-E-P-G-E-P-C. We're wanting to the Ephesians part, the eating part.

This morning we're doing a review discussion. So we've been in chapter one of Ephesians for a number of weeks now.

[1:11] We want to pause, take a step back, and then step back from all the details and kind of look at the big picture. We want to also give you an opportunity to talk about what you've been learning, what, what, how God has been challenging or teaching you or whatever questions you might have.

But I want to first read chapter one. We're looking at verses one through twenty-one. So I'm leaving the last two verses of chapter one for next week for Easter.

We talk about Christ exalted. So if you're able, please stand as I read from Ephesians one, verses one to twenty-one.

We'll read the text and we'll pray that God would speak the text to our own hearts and then we'll dig into it. Ephesians one, one.

Ephesians one, one. Ephesians one, one. Ephesians one, one. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. To the saints who are Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

[2:21] Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

Just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we be holy and blameless before him.

In love he predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself, according to the kind intention of his will. To the praise of the glory of his will, which he freely bestows on us and the beloved.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight.

He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his kind intention, which he purposed in him. With a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of times.

[3:35] The summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon earth. In him also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to his purpose, who works all things after the counsel of his will.

To the end that we who are the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of his glory. In him you also, after listening to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance with a view to the redemption of God's own possession to the praise of his glory.

For this reason, I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus, which exists among you and your love for all the saints. I did not cease giving thanks for you while making mention of you in my prayers.

That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the true knowledge of him.

[4:57] I pray that the eyes of your heart, having been enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of his calling. What are the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints.

And what is the surpassing greatness of his power toward us who believe. In accordance with the working of the strength of his might, which he brought about in Christ.

When he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenlies. Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion.

And every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. So reads the word of God. Let us pray. Father, open our hearts and our minds today as we talk about your word.

As we talk and testify of your word, father, as we discuss things together. May that cause the word to be, to take greater root in our hearts.

[6:04] That our faith would grow. That our faith would be stronger in you. That our praise would be more glorious. That our worship, father, might be enriched.

That our thoughts might be engaged. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. Baruch.

Atah Adonai Eloheinu. Melek HaOlam. Anyone know what I did? No. Blessed. Baruch. Atah Adonai Eloheinu. Melek HaOlam. Anyone know what I did? No.

Blessed. Baruch. Atah you. Melek HaOlam. Melek HaOlam. Melek HaOlam. Melek HaOlam. No. Blessed. Blessed. Baruch. Atah you. Baruch. Baruch. Atah you. Atah you. Adonai. Atonai.

[7:02] Atonai. Lord. Eloheinu. Our God. Melek. Melek. King HaOlam. Our God. Melek. King HaOlam. Of the universe.

That is a common Jewish prayer. Blessing. That is a common Jewish prayer. Blessing. What is a blessing?

So Paul starts his letter with blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies. Three times in verse three he used the word bless or blessing.

What's a blessing? What does it mean to bless? Blessed be the God so there is blessing given to God. That means to praise him. To adore him. Right? And then who has blessed us?

So when a blessing comes to us it's not praise but it's benefits. It's enrichment. It's ways that God has given to us to bestow gracious benefits.

[8:08] The word blessing in Greek is eulogia. Eulogia. Eulogia. Eulogia. Eulogia.

Eulogia. So you've heard the word. Eulogy means literally good word. Eulogia means literally good word. Eulogia means literally good word. And then logos, loga, word, good word.

Latin it's benedictus. So again bene, good, diction, word, good word. So when we close the service, we don't say benediction.

We say a good word because we want to use words that we understand, not speak in Latin or Greek. So Paul here is giving a blessing to God, verse 3.

And I've mentioned it before, verse 3 through verse 14 is all one sentence. Paul is just going on and on and on about the ways that God has blessed us, several ways he's blessed us.

[9:13] And so we see, so in your outline, if you use them or if you color on them, whatever you do with them, we talked about Paul, who's Paul in the first couple of verses.

And then in verses 3 to 14, we have those blessings. Paul is blessing God for the way that he has blessed us. And he enumerates several things. He talks about how God chose us, how he predestined us to adoption.

He rescued us from slavery to sin. He revealed to us the mystery of his eternal plan. And then he guaranteed an inheritance to us by giving us the Holy Spirit.

So five distinct blessings there. And then we saw in the second half of chapter 1, verses 15 to 21, Paul's prayer. We see how Paul prays.

Paul writes down to these people that he's writing to, and he tells them exactly what he's praying for them. What he wants God to do, to act upon them.

[10:14] And so he prays, right? He talks about two kinds of prayer. He talks about giving thanksgiving. He keeps on thanking. And if you read through different letters of Paul, he'll say that at the beginning.

I give thanks for you. I give thanks for you. I give thanks. He's always mindful of all these churches. And he's giving thanks for their faith and their love. And then he gives intercession. Now he's going to pray on their behalf.

He's going to pray something that God would do. And first he prays in verse 17 that God would give them a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. And remember that word knowledge, to know God.

We're not talking about academic knowledge. We're not talking about kind of head knowledge. We're talking about this deep personal relationship, right? Intimate, deeper, accurate knowledge of God.

To keep growing in our relationship with God. And then I can yell at her. It's okay. We love children in here. So then he prays that their understanding would grow also in three things.

[11:22] That they would understand the hope of his calling, which is assurance of salvation. He wants them to know the certainty with which they're saved. That they might be confident that God has done it.

Right? And then he prays that they might know their inheritance. How glorious, how great is that future heaven. It's not just that we go to heaven. It's great and glorious and rich and full.

And then he prays that they might know the power. Look at that, verse 19. The power. What kind of power? The power of God that works in believers.

Or more literally, the power of God that's working toward those who are believing. Who are believing. Present tense. Who are believing.

And it's the same power as what? Same power to raise Jesus from the dead. That's that. Is that some kind of power? And seated him in the heavenlies.

[12:24] Right? Can you believe that? Do you believe that? That that kind of power is at work in you as you believe.

Your belief enacts that power. It's not automatic. It's as you believe.

As you wait upon him. Right? Okay. So that's a quick review. So let's talk. I want to hear from you. What's God teaching? What are you discovering?

Anything you're surprised with here in Ephesians 1 these last several weeks? Anything God has challenged you with? Or questions? Let's talk about the first part.

The blessings. So what's God teaching you? Your turn. This could be real short. Or it could be. Who has.

[13:25] Where our hope is. Where our hope is. Where is it Ron? Well it's not here. Yes. You mean this isn't your best life now?

All the things that are happening in the world. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. It's quite another. Our heart. And our hope to something greater.

Something more powerful. Yeah. To our king. Yeah. If we put our hopes in this world. And this life. And security. And comfort.

Whatever. What is your hope? Yeah. It's going to fade. Right. We'll be disappointed. But we have a living hope. A hope. Right. That's sure. That's. Because God has.

Done certain things. Good. What else? Yes. Patience. Patience. I don't like that word. You know that word means long suffering.

[14:21] Instead of short suffering. It means long. I pray for patience. You pray for patience? Oh. That's dangerous. No. I'm teasing. I'm just teasing.

Because what does God do when we pray for patience? He gives you the hard. You know. He doesn't just give you patience. He. He. He develops it in you. Right. Well. Good for you. You're. You're a courageous Christian.

Yeah. Yeah. The Holy Spirit. When the Holy Spirit came on the church at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2, everything changed, didn't it? Everything. All of a sudden the disciples, oh, now we get it.

[20:40] Right? Now they're speaking boldly. Now they're, and the church kept growing because of this dynamic work in them. Donna.

You got another one? Oh, beautiful. Oh. Is this a red-headed guy? He's got a red mustache. For you. That's me? No.

It's for you. Oh, it's for me? For you. Thank you, sweetheart. I have a place in my office for that. I mean on the wall. You're very sweet.

What else? Yes, John. John. A word we hear in the New Testament regularly is gospel. More often than not, it's just a word thrown out with the expectation you know what we mean.

1 Corinthians 15, Paul gives a little snapshot version of what the gospel is. But I like these five points because it's a fleshing out of the gospel. Yeah. Good.

[21:42] Yeah. Remember, we've traditionally talked about the gospel and we've translated it into some workable things so that when we talk about the gospel, we know what it is.

Right? Four words, right? God. God. Who's God? Gracious, forgiving, all that, but he's also holy. Righteous.

Right? Just. And then who comes next? Man. Man. Man. What's man? Sin. He's not God, right? Compared to God. Right?

He's in trouble. He's got problems. Can't fix himself. What's the solution? Part three. Christ. Christ is the solution. God. Man. Trouble. Christ.

Solution. Right? Which is outlined here. Right? He redeemed us. And then what's the fourth part of the gospel? What?

[22:40] What? What? Response. Faith. Belief. That's the gospel. And if you take one of those parts out, you don't have the gospel. You take God out and just talk about man and man doesn't make sense without God.

Man and sin doesn't make sense without God. You got to talk about who God is. In this culture, you got to talk about who God is because they don't know who God is anymore. God used to be a foreknown conclusion.

Not anymore. Who's God? Well, they just make up their own. Right? Man. Man. Oh, man's good. He has a good heart. Right? That's what we want to say. That's not true.

Christ. Who's Christ? Well, which Christ are you talking about? Right? And then what's faith? So that's the gospel. Yeah. But absolutely. It's what Paul's picturing here is God's eternal plan of the gospel.

Meaning the good news. Right? And good news only makes sense in contrast with bad news.

That's part two. Right? God. Man. There's the bad news.

[23:43] Christ is the good news. Right? So. What else you got? Yes, Dawn. Verses 9 and 10. Verses 9 and 10. Makes known the mystery of his will.

What about 9 and 10? Well, according to his good pleasure, which is focused in Christ, to be put into effect, and the time of people have reached their fulfillment, to put all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

That's just like, oh, that was why he did all. Yeah. When we get to the end of Revelation, what do we have?

Right? The description of heaven. It's a description of Eden. Yep. But, you know, there's trees. There's a river. There's the tree of life is back there again.

Right? God's restoring everything. That's the eternal long view picture. Yeah. And then, yeah, the big mystery that he's revealing here is what?

[24:58] Mystery is something that God had not revealed in the Old Testament. So he revealed it in the New Testament through Paul. What is that revelation? What's the new thing, the brand new thing that God's doing besides Christ, right?

What's the result of it? Is what? Gentiles. Gentiles. In the Old Testament, where were the Gentiles? When you came to the temple as a Gentile, where were you? Yeah, you park in the back lot. And don't cross this line or we'll kill you. Right?

Israelites got closer and closer. Finally, the priest got closer. Finally, the high priest is the only one that only once a year goes into the Holy of Holies. Right? That's the picture. Gentiles are without hope and without God.

Now they're included on equal status right here. They don't have to be circumcised. They don't have to become Jewish.

[26:02] They have faith in Christ. And they walk as Christ's children. But that was the great mystery because in the Old Testament, it's all about Israel. You know, Gentiles kind of came in, but they were, you know, kind of part member, part not.

Right? What else? What else? How about the prayer of Paul?

How does Paul pray? Do you pray like that? Do you want to pray like that? Is that a good prayer?

While you're in church, you have to say it's a good prayer.

But is it good? I mean, good in the sense, does it make sense to you? That it's something, yeah, I would like to adopt. That kind of prayer. It's hard sometimes to give thanks when everything's going wrong.

It's definitely a good perspective. Thank you, Lord, for giving me this hardship, to say it lightly.

Right. Even though I'm going through all this, I know you are teaching me something in this.

[27:15] I'm going to get through because of you. Yes. Yes, exactly. Yeah, so Philippians 4, right? 6. Be anxious for nothing, but in everything, including the things that make you anxious, by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.

And what will happen? The peace of God will do what? Will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

It's a guaranteed prayer. And what's the difference? Be anxious for nothing, but by prayer and supplication, let your requests be made known.

What did I leave out? Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving is the difference. Like Carissa was just saying, how do I give thanks when I'm involved in something that makes me so anxious, makes me so worse, so distressed, so disturbed of soul?

How do you give thanks in those times? And Carissa said it very well. It's just like, okay, thank you because I know you're working. Right? I trust that you're doing all of this.

[28:27] That you'll never leave or forsake me. That you'll bring good out of this. Whatever. That you know what you're doing. Well, and then I change.

Yeah. Like you were saying, I'm the one who changes. Right. Yeah. Right? My heart is now shifting. Yeah. Where my eyes are off of me. Yeah. And my situation and my eyes are shifting to, Lord, what do you want to do with me in this?

Or, Lord, like you said, I'm surrendering this to you. I don't like it. Right? It feels uncomfortable, but it's me who changes. My heart's changing in the midst of all that.

Yeah. And I'm not grumbling. That's what prayer does. Yeah. Prayer changes us. Changes our perspective. Changes our heart. I like what you said that it activates our faith.

Yeah. Yeah. Because I think I've met a lot of Christians in my past that have faith. By which they mean, I walked the aisle.

[29:30] I prayed. I received Jesus into my heart. That was 20 years ago. What are you doing now? Where's your faith now? They talk about faith as this, yeah, I believed. I believed that Jesus died for my sins.

Right? I believe. Oh, man, I believed that when I was a kid. Didn't change my life. I walked the aisles hundreds of times. It didn't change my life. Until God did it.

Right? But as a Christian, what is faith? And the New Testament puts it in present tense language. Still believing.

Still trusting. That's how I walk by the Spirit. That's how I walk in love. That's Noah and Abraham and Enoch and all those folks.

They walked with God because they trusted God and they had a relationship with God. It was an active thing, not a past thing. I got fire insurance and I'm good now.

[30:28] And now I do my own thing. So. I think verse 13 kind of speaks to the faith, right? Yes.

I should know that. You heard and believed. Yeah. Where does faith come from? How do you believe? Where does faith come from? Hearing. What? Hearing. Hearing. So Romans 10. Faith comes by hearing. And hearing what? The Word of Christ. Faith is born in you when you hear the Word of Christ. When you hear the Gospel. When God opens your ears to hear, truly hear. Oh, that applies to me. Oh, I'm in trouble. Oh, Jesus. You know, that's coming to believe that. Faith comes by hearing.

[31:27] What else? What else? We got it all? I know there's a lot there. We went, what, eight weeks instead of five? Kind of wanted to do the whole chapter. All right. All right. Any other thoughts, questions? Zach? Some astute scholar brought up the snake and how he tricked us when we're not supposed to eat the fruit. And I'm a person that struggles to get out of Genesis and remember the rest of the story. But I see terms like, plan for the fullness of time, before the foundations of the world. I see a culmination happening here. But you have the, like, more historical books that create a chronology for us of what happens and what takes place, with it ending shortly after Jesus with the book of Acts.

[32:35] I'm seeing a hope that this all happened for a reason and that that reason is finally being fleshed out.

And in, like, you know, in micro-narratives, too. Like, however we kind of live that story of us, you know, our kind of whatever you want to call our innocence, young. And then our failures. And then that sin nature that takes root. And then, yeah, Christ coming into our lives. It seems, yeah, like, Paul is setting the stage of capturing that and explaining that to us. Paul, as we know, if you've read him very long, he's just this brilliant mind, right? He's got all this thoughts.

He doesn't write like John or Peter. He writes like Paul. Lots of words. Long sentences. Lots of big thoughts.

[33:39] And, yeah, you have here eternity passed to the fullness of time. I mean, in one sentence, he's talking about the whole, God's got the whole thing. He has planned it.

He has predestined it. He has chosen. He has, right? And we're privileged to be engaged in it. And our part is absolutely important.

Our choices, our decisions are absolutely important in these things. It's not like we're robots. He chose us, you know, and then we go and we do this. Is that how your life works?

No. It's kind of amazing when we think, I'm chosen. Wow. My life that's all over. I'm no robot. I kind of wish I was sometimes.

But what a huge God. What a huge God.

[34:41] Paul has in mind. And he believes. And Paul preaches that we talk to him. That we relate to him.

That we lean on him. That we learn to abide in him. That we learn to get to know him more and more. Like you know another person. To spend time with him and talk with him and listen.

Listen? Do we listen? Yeah, we try. It's really hard, right? We talk so much. Right?

We get it. Wake up in the morning. We hear voices. I don't mean, you know. A voice. Where is it coming from? My soul. My soul.

You know. I don't want to get up. Okay. So we're fighting that all the time. All right. Anything else? Debbie.

[35:38] Well, the concept of the same power that rose Jesus from the dead is worth within us. I mean, that just, every time I think about it or read it, I can't comprehend it.

But what came to mind is Mark 9, 24, when the Father says, I believe, I believe, help me with my unbelief. That hits home to me.

That just puts me right where it is. Like, wow, can I really meditate on this kind of power, what that means, and that we have access to it.

So, yeah, and that was the one where the boy had demons and the Father came because the disciples couldn't do anything.

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. So, yeah. That was. Yeah, I believe. I believe Jesus can do it. I believe. But I'm still unbelieving, too. And that's a great way to.

[36:39] It's an appropriate prayer. It's in the gospel. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Very good. Any others? Okay.

Let's close in prayer. Father, we thank you for the work, for the witness, for the word. We pray, Father, that you would bring to mind these things.

May Paul's prayer become our prayer. May these blessings become that we have received as believers. May those blessings be what cause us and motivate us to worship you.

To grant you thanks for all these great things you've given to us. Every blessing you've given to us. And so we thank you in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.