

Paul, an Apostle of Christ Jesus

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[0:00] For my God is the Ancient of Days. Take out your Bibles with me please and turn to the epistle, the letter, the book called Ephesians.

Find it right after Galatians, right before Philippians and Colossians. Remember, Gentiles eat pork chops.

Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians. Ephesians, we just began last week with an overview, kind of looking at what does this book have?

Why are we looking at it? What is its great riches? And there is a lot, a lot here. And this morning we're simply going to look at the first three verses.

Looking at Paul, I just wanted to pause as we began, kind of another little introduction. Who is this author? Who is Paul? He's written 13 of the letters in the New Testament.

[1:07] He's a pretty significant figure. And yet he was not one of the chosen 12, original 12 of Jesus' disciples. So why is this man so prominent in our scriptures?

So we want to read and then we'll pray and then we'll ask the Holy Spirit to help us dig in.

So if you're able, please stand as we read from the opening verses from Ephesians chapter 1. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus, by the will of God.

To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus, 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.

[2:24] So it reads, let us pray. Come thou incarnate word. Gird on thy mighty sword.

Our prayer attend. Come and thy people bless. And give thy word success. Spirit of holiness on us descend.

In Christ's name we pray. Amen. Please be seated. So who is Paul?

Who is this apostle Paul? Saul. He was standing at, approving, or the people would put their robes down at the feet of a young man named Saul as they were stoning Stephen.

There was Saul. And then in the next chapter in Acts chapter 8, Saul was in hearty agreement with putting Stephen to death.

[4:01] And Saul began ravaging the church, entering house after house and dragging off men and women. And he would put them in prison. And then we read in Acts chapter 9 about Saul and about something changing.

In fact, how Saul became Paul. I'll let Luke describe it. Acts chapter 9.

Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest. And he asked for letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus so that if he found any belonging to the way, both men and women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem.

And it came about that as he journeyed, he was approaching Damascus. And suddenly, a light from heaven flashed around him, and he fell to the ground.

And he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And he said, who art thou, Lord?

[5 : 15] And he said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. But rise and enter the city, and it shall be told you what you must do.

And the men who traveled with him stood speechless, hearing the voice but seeing no one. And Saul got up from the ground, and though his eyes were open, he could see nothing.

And leading him by the hand, they brought him into Damascus. And he was there three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias.

And the Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias. And he said, behold, here I am, Lord. And the Lord said to him, arise, and go to the street called Straight.

And inquire at the house of Judas for a man from Tarsus named Saul. For behold, he is praying. And he has seen a vision.

[6 : 19] He has seen in a vision a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight. But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he did to thy saints at Jerusalem.

And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call upon thy name. But the Lord said to him, go. For he is a chosen instrument of mine to bear my name before the Gentiles and kings and the sons of Israel.

For I will show him how much he must suffer for my name's sake. Saul, or Paul.

Could you imagine? Now here is Saul, a Pharisee of Pharisees, zealous for the law, and zealous to persecute what he considered as a cult.

This cult of Jesus, these followers of Jesus, who he believed to be a false Messiah. So Paul is persecuting.

[7 : 31] He is just fervent about this. He's dragging men and women to jail. Imagine. When he is struck by that light, he is on the ground, and he hears this voice.

Why are you persecuting me? And he says, Lord, who are you? And the Lord says, I'm Jesus. Can you imagine?

Paul thinking, what? Who? Who? This is the very name I believe is false.

And he is Lord. Can you imagine? Paul. Steeped in the traditions of the Pharisees.

A student of one of the greatest rabbis of the time, Gamaliel. And suddenly he realizes he's wrong. He's been wrong.

[8 : 42] He is persecuting the true Messiah. So he's radically converted.

Radically transformed. As Paul describes his own journey in both in Acts and to the Galatians, he writes about some of the journey that he went away.

Once this happened, he went away. To think and ponder and re-look at the scriptures. Come to terms with this revelation.

And Jesus had said, he's a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name to the Gentiles. And he will suffer. I will show him how much he will suffer for my name.

So I'm asking the question today. Why can we trust this man? Why can we trust this man? Why should we listen to this, Paul?

[9 : 44] We're going to enter into this study of the book of Ephesians. And this is a book that Paul has written. In fact, there is no question in the early church that Paul was the author.

So how do we know we can trust him? So that's what we're going to look at a little bit today. I want you to remember that we gave this, we gave an outline last week, an overview of this book.

The first three chapters are about God's work. What God has done. God has, in chapter 1, right, 4, he's chosen us. Verse 5, he's adopted us.

Verse 7, he's redeemed us and forgiven us. Verse 9, he's made known. He's revealed the mystery of his will in Jesus Christ. Verse 13, he's given us the Holy Spirit.

On and on it goes. Chapter 2, he has saved us from our sin. Chapter 2, 11 and following, he's reconciled us. Who were far away and in darkness and brought us near in Jesus Christ to the Father.

[10:49] So that now we have access to the Father through Christ. Over and over, chapters 1 through 3 talk about these great works that God has done.

Right? So that's the first three chapters. And then the whole theme of the book changes in chapter 4, verse 1, where he says, I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you've been called.

And so then in the second half of Ephesians, chapter 4, 5, and 6 is all about our walk. 1 through 3 is about God's work. Chapters 4 through 6 is about our walk.

And he starts off in 4, 1. Walk in a manner worthy of which you've been called. A worthy walk. A worthy walk includes guarding and preserving the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

The unity, not that we create, but the unity which God has already established. We guard that. We preserve it. And then he goes on and talks about the mission of the church later in chapter 4.

[11:57] And then in 4, 17, he talks about no longer walking like you used to walk before God saved you. Now we walk in a new way. We put off the old and we put on the new.

And he talks about what that walk looks like. It's a walk of truth and a walk of rightly dealing with anger. It's a walk of how we speak, no longer with corruptible words, but with edifying words, etc.

He goes on and on about walking in love, walking in light, walking in wisdom, etc. So that's the book. So we're going to walk through this book.

But back to the author. Who's the author of this book? As I said, there's no question in the early church that the letter that we call Ephesians was written by the apostle Paul.

As it says in verse 1, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus. So we go all the way back. Now critics will say that, oh, this book was written many, many years, hundreds of years later, you know, after the church, you know, they wrote it down.

[13:06] Well, to say those kind of things ignores history. Ignores recorded history. As early as 96 AD, the first century, Clement of Rome talked about Paul's writings.

In fact, quoted Paul from this book of Ephesians. In 100, around 100 AD, Ignatius. Around 130, Polycarp.

Around 180, Irenaeus. 195, Tertullian. Around 210, Origen and Eusebius. All these early church fathers. All within 200 years of the writing of this book.

This book was written around 60 AD. About 30 years after the death of Christ. Around 60, 61 AD. And the witness to that, those later church fathers, as early as 96 AD.

As early as 30 years after this book. Right? They're already testifying to this book that's already in circulation. One other note I wanted to make about verse 1.

[14:17] It says, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. To the saints who are at Ephesus. Now, in the original manuscripts, the words at Ephesus were not there.

Well, who was it written to? Well, that was blank. Well, then who was it written to? So, it reads, to the saints who are at, or at, blank.

And who are faithful in Christ Jesus. So, who is it written to? Well, it's clearly written to the area of Ephesus. And most scholars believe that it was filled in later at Ephesus.

In fact, this letter, as it came to each church. Whether it's Laodicea, or Heropolis, or Ephesus. That when they received it, they would copy it.

And they'd fill in, in that blank, they'd fill in their own name. So, it became what was called a circular letter. It went through all the, Paul intended it for, not to be for just one specific congregation.

[15:20] But for all the churches, where he had been. That's how universally applicable Ephesians is. It applies to every Christian, in every place, at every time.

It's not just for a group of folks, way back in 60 AD. It's for, it applies to Christians everywhere. So, let's look at this.

An introduction to the Apostle Paul. Why should we listen to him? We'll look at that in verses 1 and 2. And then verse 3, as he launches into worship.

As he says in verse 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in every spiritual blessing. In Christ, just as he chose us.

And verse 5, and predestined us. And on and on and on, he goes. What is it that moved Paul to worship? So, we're asking two questions.

[16:21] First of all, we're asking, why should we listen to Paul? And then secondly, what is it that moves him to worship God in such a, in big terms?

All right? I mean, this is one long sentence. From verse 3 through verse 14, it's all one sentence. It's as if Paul can't take a breath. He's got to get all that out. Right? Right? So, what moves him to worship?

And then for application to us, what moves us to worship? You know, he's blessed us. Well, how has he blessed us? Well, Paul just is going to just launch into all the ways that God has blessed us.

Okay? So, first question. What, why should we listen to Paul? Or what persuades us to listen to Paul? Why should we trust him? Well, three reasons.

First of all, his commission. As he writes in verse 1, he is an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God. He is an apostle of Christ Jesus.

[17:20] That's how he introduces himself as an apostle. Apostle means one who is sent. So, in a general sense, we can say missionaries are apostles.

Not capital A, but small a. They're sent ones. We've sent them. They're sent on a mission. Right? Missionary. To give the message of Jesus Christ.

But Paul claims to be more than that. He claims to be an apostle on the level of Peter, James, John, and the other disciples.

Whom Jesus set apart as apostles. Right? He had all these disciples and he takes 12 and makes them apostles. Because they've been with him.

They've seen everything that he's done. They're a witness of his resurrection. And then they're given the commission to preach. Paul says he's on that same level. He's a representative of Christ too.

[18:23] He has seen the risen Christ. One of the requirements to be an apostle is to have witnessed the resurrection of Christ.

Well, when did Paul witness that? We just read it, right? We just read it in chapter 9 of Acts. He was personally commissioned by Jesus Christ.

Blinded by the light, so to speak. So he sent... He's an apostle of Jesus Christ. Or you might say an apostle from Jesus Christ.

That's the one who sends him. He's a sent one from Jesus Christ. Christ is the one who chose him. As Jesus said in Acts 9.

Paul is a chosen instrument of mine that I'm sending. Right? Sending to Gentiles. Sending to kings. Sending to the children of Israel.

[19 : 23] I'm sending this man. And it's curious. When you read through the four gospels, you hear nothing of this man. Right? Not until, as I said, the end of chapter 7 of Acts.

So Jesus spends all this time with these other 12. And it commissions them. One, we know Judas falls, fails, kills himself.

Acts chapter 1. The disciples decide to replace him with Matthias. Who had been with them all at the same time. The question is, did the church chose Matthias, but did Jesus?

Because here in chapter 9, Jesus chooses someone else. In fact, to be more prominent, perhaps, than Peter himself. I don't know.

He fills a lot of the New Testament. Why? So he's chosen by Jesus himself. He's set apart. He's commissioned.

[20 : 31] And then Paul says, by the will of God. An apostle from, a sent one from Christ Jesus. By the will of God. Which means he did not, God did not come to Paul and say, Hey, would you like to help?

Did you notice any invitation from God to Paul? Paul would, who would volunteer? Who would like to volunteer to go and suffer for my name?

Anybody, anybody willing? No, none of that. No, it's just, you're going. By the will of God. It is God's will for you to go, bear his name, carry his name, and to suffer for that name.

He was not a volunteer. He was a chosen instrument. Here's Paul's explanation. So we read in Acts, right, what happened.

Well, how did Paul feel about this whole thing? In Galatians chapter one, Paul gives some of his personal background to the Galatians. He's desiring to let them know.

[21 : 36] In fact, Galatians chapter one and two tells us a lot of background about Paul, about those initial days. Here's what he says. Galatians one, Paul, an apostle, not from men, nor through man, but through Jesus Christ and God, the father who raised him from the dead.

For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it.

And I was advancing in Judaism beyond any of my own age among my people. So extremely zealous was I for the tradition of my elders.

But when he who had set me apart before I was born and who called me by his grace was pleased to reveal his son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone.

Nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me. But I went away into Arabia and returned again to Damascus. So he tells us there that after he was commissioned, he went away.

[23 : 04] And we come later to find out it was about three years away. And then he came back. He went away. What did he do? He doesn't tell us, but we could surmise that from what he did after that, he went away to study.

He went away to look at the scriptures and to see how could I have gotten it wrong? Is Jesus truly the Messiah?

And so now with a changed mind, right, to be forced to look at, okay, I wasn't wrong. I didn't have it right. I need to look afresh on the scriptures to look at all those scriptures. And that's where he comes away.

And he writes to us much of what God revealed to him during those years. So why should we trust him? One, well, he's been commissioned by the Lord. Secondly, why should we listen to him?

Because what he writes, he says, Paul, an apostle from Jesus Christ by the will of God to the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus.

[24 : 10] So here he's writing to saints. Well, who are saints? Who are saints? Are they the ones that the Catholic Church enumerates, right? Do you have to do three miracles or something?

And you have to be special and have a halo? I don't know. I'm sorry if you're Catholic. That's not what a saint is.

Saints aren't ones that have some, achieved some higher level of performance or been a special work of God. Paul is writing to the saints who are also believers.

You don't become a saint by accomplishing something. You become a saint as a gift. Who are saints?

Holy ones. You are holy ones. You're not to become holy ones. You are holy ones who have believed upon Jesus Christ.

[25 : 11] How do I become holy? How do I, who have been a sinner all my life, right? How can I become a holy one? Well, I've got to be washed and cleansed, right?

And there has to be an exchange. I have to give to Christ my sins who he pays for on the cross and then he gives me his holiness and that's how I become a holy one.

Saints, holy ones. Now, saints, being a saint, being a holy one does not mean that you are without sin. You are a saint who still sins, right?

Right? You are a saint who still sins. And God knows that. And that's why Jesus tells us to pray what? Forgive us our debts as we forgive.

That's a prayer not given to somebody who's not a believer yet. That's a prayer given to children of the Father. We ask the Father daily, forgive me for those daily sins.

[26 : 22] I still sin. I still, right? I act selfishly. I still hold back. I still have those valleys. And I ask for forgiveness that I might have a clear relationship with the Father.

Forgive us. Wash my feet. Holy ones, set apart for God's purpose. They are saints. Saints. And then he gives a second trait to these who are the readers of this book.

Saints who are saints. And secondly, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus. Now, I don't think he means faithful in the sense that they've kind of measured up and they've been faithful.

You know, he's not just writing to the spiritual crust of the congregation that are the faithful ones, not the unfaithful ones. I think he's writing to those who are.

You could translate this word either faithful, who are faithful, or you could translate the word as who are believers. It's the same word.

[27 : 29] The word for faithful and the word for belief is the same word. And I don't think he's talking about who have been faithful, right? Who have been faithful in their duty, but who are believing ones.

Who are trusting. In what? Who are faithful in Christ Jesus. Who are believing in Christ Jesus. Who are trusting in Christ Jesus. I think that's as simply as what he's talking about.

Those who are saints. You've been given the gift of sainthood and you've been given a gift of faith. And God changed our heart. Just like when Paul's converted, we're converted in a similar way.

Not as dramatic, probably. I don't know. Maybe some have. Anybody been knocked off a horse? Two by four. Two by four. You had a two by four, but maybe not without the horse and the lion.

Right? But there had to be a point where God came. Right? And changed you. And that's my witness.

[28 : 34] I tried to change myself for years and years. Walked the aisle. Prayed the prayer. Right? Went to Billy Graham. Did the whole thing. Didn't work. Didn't change me.

And then one day God changed me. Because again, suddenly my heart was changed. Suddenly, instead of hating God, I loved God. Suddenly, instead of hating his commandments, I loved his commandments.

Now I valued him. That's how you know, by the way. You've truly been converted is has your heart changed. Now there's days I'm not, you know, cherishing obedience when it's under hardship.

Hardship. But still at the bottom of, you know, the very bottom of my heart. Still seek him. Want him. And I'm only faithful because he's faithful.

So active in believing in Christ. Trusting in Christ. Like the vine and the branches. The vine and the branches holding on.

[29 : 34] Faithfully holding on to him. To bear fruit. What does he want for us? What does he want? So verse 2, he says, he gives a blessing to them.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. What is this that he's saying? What is grace and peace? Grace is undeserved favor. Right? Grace is something I don't deserve.

He's given to us grace. And Paul's saying, I pray that God gives you more grace. That God bestows on you more grace so that you can grow. More grace.

And peace. What's peace? Not external peace, but internal peace. Right? Jesus said, it's not the peace of the world that I give to you.

I give you a different kind of peace. A shalom. A wholeness. A healing with God. A reconciliation with God. Pray that you have that kind of peace.

[30 : 34] And then note the source of that. He says, I want this grace to you and peace. From where? From what source? From God the Father. And from the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. This peace. And by that way, that's how Paul refers to the Father and the Son throughout the gospel. Or throughout this letter. Is God the Father.

And the Lord Jesus Christ. God the Father. And the Lord Jesus Christ. Okay. So what convinces us to listen to Paul?

That was the first question. Why should we listen to him? Because he's been a chosen instrument. He has been chosen by the Lord Jesus himself. Radically changed and set apart to be a chosen instrument.

Okay. So he comes with the authority of Jesus Christ. And he is sent by Jesus Christ. And then secondly, he's written for every Christian. And then he comes with the blessing of the Father and the Son.

[31 : 34] So verse 3 raises another question. Okay. Where he's going to launch into what we'll begin to look at next week. This blessing.

Verse 3 says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who has blessed us. So he's using blessing in different ways here. Verse 3.

First he's using blessed be the God. So he's, it's another word for praising God. God, blessed be the God. Praise be the God.

I confess to this God. And then the blessings that come to us. So he's giving blessing to God who has blessed us. So notice his worship. As I said before, verse 3 to 14 is all one sentence.

It's an outburst of praise. It's as if Paul is caught up in thinking through how God has blessed us.

[32 : 33] Right? Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Just as he, and then he begins to launch into the ways that God has blessed us.

Blessed be. The Greek word is eulogia. Eulogia. Anybody hear an English word in there?

Eulogy. Eulogy. E-U meaning well or good. Logia meaning word.

So good word. So at a funeral we give a eulogy, right? We give a good word. We talk about that person's life. A eulogy. A good word about that.

In Latin it's the word benedictio. Well I might be pronouncing, I don't know Latin so I'm just throwing words out. But we hear another word.

[33 : 32] Benediction, right? Same thing. Bene. Good. Diction. Word. Good word. So benediction.

We do a benediction at the end of the service. I never say benediction. I say let's close with a good word. I just speak English instead of Latin. Because I don't know that.

But a good word. So he, blessed be. So he's saying good word to God. The Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Good word.

A praise. A gratitude. A confession about God as our source. And then I want you to notice his theology as we kind of just give a big picture of verses 3 through 14.

Because that's all the one sentence. What's his theology here? Note the flow. Right? So it starts with God the Father. And it includes the Lord Jesus Christ.

[34 : 34] So 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. So in other words, the Father. Starting with the Father who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.

So how has the Father blessed us? Verse 4. He's blessed us. Verse 4. By choosing us. He chose us in him, in Christ, before the foundation of the world. That we be holy and blameless before him.

Verse 5. He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to himself. Right? Verse 7. In him, in Christ, we have redemption through his blood.

The forgiveness of our trespasses. According to the riches of his, the Father's grace. Which he lavished upon us. Verse 9. He, the Father, made known to us the mystery of his will.

According to his kind attention which he purposed in him, in Christ. All right? You keep going. Verse 11. He's given us an inheritance. Right?

[35 : 41] What is that inheritance? Verse 13. In him, in Christ, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed, you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise, who's given us a pledge of our inheritance.

So we have an inheritance in the future, but we already have a pledge of that inheritance right now. And that is the Holy Spirit. He's given you the Holy Spirit.

He is the engagement ring. The word pledge in modern Greek means engagement ring. So in a picture, the Holy Spirit is like the engagement ring.

The promise of our future marriage with Christ. So it's the, the, the Father. It begins with the Father. And notice, as I read, it goes all in or through Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ is the mediator and the center of all. So verse 4, he chose us in him. Speaking of Jesus. Right? He, verse 5, he predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.

[36 : 51] Jesus, the mediator. Verse 7. In him, in Christ, we have redemption. Verse 10. With a view suitable, with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of times.

That is the summing up of all things in Christ. Things in heavens and things on the earth. In him also we have an inheritance. So in Christ again. Verse 13.

In him, in Christ. So all the way through. So it starts with the Father blessing us. But the Father blesses us in Christ. And it started before the foundation of the world. And it comes to us in the present when we believe.

And so these blessings come to us. Some of these blessings, like the choosing. Verse 4. He chose us in him before the foundation of the world. Well, I wasn't there for that.

I wasn't there for that. And yet I was already blessed. In eternity past. How do I? We'll talk next week.

[37 : 59] How do we? How does that work? How does that fit into how I think about things? So. And then.

Then it's a triune work. So we see by verse 13. And 14. He includes the Holy Spirit. So the Father blesses. Everything is through Jesus Christ. As the mediator.

And then it's applied to us. How? How? Who applies it to us? No idea. We've talked about Father.

Talked about Son. Who might be the one who applies it to us? The Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit. See the different. There's different roles in the Trinity. Father, Son, Holy Spirit are all involved in our salvation.

They're all involved in the ways that we're blessed. The Father plans it. Executes it. The Son accomplishes it.

[38 : 58] Right? Not just on the cross. But in His whole life. In His teaching. In His death and resurrection. And in His sitting on His throne.

Right? At the right hand of the Father. He's still executing. The Son accomplishes it. And the Holy Spirit is the one who applies it to us personally. He's the one who comes.

Right? Jesus sends the Spirit to us. And the Holy Spirit is the whole reason we can walk. Right? I walk with the Spirit. I walk in the power of the Spirit.

Right? The Spirit enables me. Empowers me. Emboldens me. When I walk with Him. I can grieve Him.

Right? Amen. So we have the whole blessing coming to us as a spiritual blessing. Pertaining.

[39 : 55] A work that's pertaining to the Spirit. In Him. Verse 13. Now I'm involved too. I'm not neutral in this. I'm involved. In Him you also after listening to the message of the truth.

Okay. So it comes through this message of truth. The gospel of your salvation. Try to hear this truth. This gospel. Having also belief. So as I believe in it.

What happens? I'm sealed in Christ. With the Holy Spirit of promise. Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance. What a great blessing.

So Paul states these blessings as a fact.

Don't you notice that too? Who has blessed us. Not will. But who has. Verse 3. He already has. And it must be already has.

[40 : 55] Because it was started before the foundation of the world. Right? Part of it becomes present in verse 13. Where I now I come in. And I'm believing. Right? But the redemption happened before I was born.

Because that happened back when Christ was honored. The adoption happened before. So. Paul states these things as a fact.

I'm already blessed. All these blessings. Having been chosen. Having been adopted. Having been redeemed. And forgiven. Having been sealed with the Holy Spirit. All these rich blessings.

So how does it come to believers? So this thing that God started way, way back. And blesses us. How does it come to us? How does it come to us?

How do we become part of it? Right? It gives us. He mentions us believing. Verse 13. Well Paul explains it in Galatians 3 as well. Hmm?

[41 : 59] Hmm? I can't hear you. No, it's all right. Are you okay? You're just kind of. Okay. Galatians 3. He says, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.

By becoming a curse for us. For it is written. Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. So that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles.

That's interesting. So in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham. Now Abraham was way, way back, right? When God blessed Abraham, that comes all the way down through the centuries to us.

Paul's going to explain that. The blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith. Wait a minute. So the blessing of Abraham had something to do with the Holy Spirit coming to us?

That's what he's saying. So that we might receive the promised spirit through faith. How does it come to us? Through faith. Through our believing.

[43 : 05] To give a human example, brothers. Even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring.

Now do you remember that promise of Abraham? Way back in Genesis 12. Genesis 12, the Lord said to Abraham, go from your country and your kindred and your father's house.

To the lamb that I will show you and I will make you a great nation. I will bless you and make your name great so that you will be a blessing. And I will bless those who bless you and him who dishonors you I will curse.

And in you, Abraham, in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed. In you, all the families.

That's where the Gentiles come in. In you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. So God's blessing of Abraham, which really had to do with the starting of the whole Jewish Israelite family, right?

[44 : 08] Which we read about all through the Old Testament. Was meant not to stop there, but to continue on to bless all the families of the earth. So how does that connect to Abraham?

Watch what Paul does back in Galatians 3. Where am I? Getting on the right note here. Now the promises that were made to Abraham and to his offspring.

Now Paul's going to get technical and do a little bit of Greek stuff here. He says, actually he's going to do Hebrew, isn't he?

He says, it does not say referring to what he's just quoted. And to offsprings, plural, referring to many, but referring to one. And to your offspring, who is Christ.

So in other words, when God made the promise to Abraham, in you, all families of the earth will be blessed. What he said was, in your offspring, singular.

[45:16] In your offspring. Well, who is his singular offspring? Well, it was Isaac. Did he bless all the world with Isaac? No. Then there was Jacob.

Did he bless everybody through Jacob? No. Joseph. Moses. David.

Ooh, he got pretty close with David, didn't he? Solomon. Got even closer with Solomon. Because there was people coming from parts of the world to hear Solomon. But no, that wasn't it.

Who's the offspring? And he tells us, doesn't he? He tells us it's Christ. Who is a offspring of Abraham? Through Isaac. Through Isaac. Through Jacob.

Right? Through Judah. Not Joseph. Through Judah. Through David. Through Mary. Physically.

[46:15] And through the other Joseph in the first century. As an adopted son of Joseph. God's plan A.

Through Abraham and his offspring. Going all the way back to Genesis. It was God's plan A. When the Jews messed it up in the Old Testament.

And the Old Testament proves that you can't keep the law. Does it not? I mean, the Jews couldn't. Even David couldn't do it. Right? Even Daniel couldn't. Even our best, best, best, best. Moses couldn't do it.

Right? So. Plan A. When they messed it up, God didn't say, okay, okay. I'm just going to give it to the Gentiles.

No. That was always his plan. Plan A. Through Abraham and his offspring. To bless all the nations of the earth. Through one seed. Which was Christ. Christ who fulfilled the law. And then became our redeemer.

[47:18] God's unfolding plan. If you read the Old Testament. You'll see an unfolding plan. Abraham. Becomes a nation. Builds a nation of priests.

Raises up King David. Who looks like he's the answer. But he's not. And then Solomon looks like even a better answer. But he's not it by far. Finally there is one.

Who is. Not only a king messiah. But he's also a priest. And he's a prophet. He's a prophet, priest, and king. That no one else had ever been.

He becomes the answer. And now these blessings come to us. Planned by the Father. Accomplished by Jesus. Applied by the Holy Spirit. And then notice the last phrase in verse 3.

He blessed us with every spiritual blessing. Where? In the heavenly places. In Christ. Well wait a minute. Does that mean I don't get them until I get to heaven? In the heavenlies.

[48:21] What does that mean? In the heavenlies. Well. Chapter 1. All the way down to verse 20. All these great things which he brought about in Christ. When he raised him from the dead.

And seated him at his right hand. In the heavenly places. Okay. In the heavenly places. That's where Jesus is. And then go down to chapter 2 verse 6. Well verse 5.

Even when we were dead in our transgressions. He made us alive together with Christ. By grace you've been saved. And raised us up with him. And seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

Wait. It sounds like that's where we are. Because when we're made alive we're also raised up. With him. So all the heavenly.

All the blessings we have are in the heavenly places where Christ is. It's also where we are. Right? That's what it says.

[49 : 19] In the heavenlies. In the heaven is where our home is. In the heaven is where our life is. In the heaven Jesus said is where our treasures are.

We've stored our treasures in heaven. That's where our hope is. So even though we're here on earth.

That's where our real life is. That's where our real treasure is. That's where our real hope is. So yes. That's where our blessings are. Because I don't feel those blessings all the time, do I?

A lot of times I feel not blessed. And so we have this thing here in our church. We say, how you doing? And some of us say, fair to middling.

Some say, Dan, what do you say? Blessed beyond all measure. See, that's a man of faith.

[50 : 20] Who sees beyond this world? I'm a little more of a feeler, so I'm like, how you doing? I don't always feel great.

So I will say, fair to middling. Explain that. Fair to middling. So we had a whole men's discussion one day.

But it's fair to middling because middling is in the middle of Texas, right? So we say, okay, what's the middle of Colorado? Fair play. So it's fair play to middling.

But what it means, I heard this when I was a pastor in California. And the first time I heard it, I'm like, what? What's fair to middling?

And it was someone from, I think, the Midwest who had this term. It just means, you know, kind of in the middle. Not real great, not real low. But kind of in the middle. Somewhere fair to middling.

[51 : 21] Fair play to middling, Texas. It's an actual saying. You can Google it, I guess. They're probably a more accurate. But that's the sense.

Trying to, you know, because our tendency, how you doing? We say what? What do we typically say? Fine. Fine. Okay. Well, what does that mean? Fine.

So it's my attempt. Spending too much time about this. But it's my attempt to try to be a little more honest and genuine. Right? That doesn't mean I'm not being genuine when I say I'm being fine.

No. Absolutely. I'm not saying that you should do. I'm just saying that's what I do. That's what I do. Because, you know, the Lord's taken us through some hard stuff.

And so I don't want to pretend that doesn't exist. But that doesn't mean what Dan says is any more or less accurate. Because that's absolutely accurate.

[52 : 20] You're blessed to be on all measure. Absolutely. Sometimes I like to say when I'm meeting somebody that I don't know if they have any faith or not. Meeting somebody. I'll say, how you doing?

I'll say, well, my king is on his throne. So that means I'm okay. We're just saying that. We don't fear because our God is the Ancient of Days.

Right? I'm not worried because my king is on his throne. Which means he's got this world in his hands. All that's going on. He's king.

He's still king. And he's putting enemies under his feet as he wills to do that. I wish he'd do it quicker. You know?

But he knows exactly what he's doing. So that's kind of... That was a long... No, no. You're fine. That's fine. You do not feel bad about asking questions.

[53 : 18] So, do you see any reason for praise here in these verses? Any reason to worship? Any motivation for gratitude? How do you respond to these blessings?

Do they move you? Do they renew you? Refocus you? Restore you? Let it be all of the above. Let's pray.

Come, holy comforter. Thy sacred witness bear in this glad hour. Thou who almighty art now rule in every heart.

And never from us depart. Spirit of power. Amen.