

THE GLORY OF THE FATHER IN OUR NEW BEGINNING

Ephesians 1.3-6, Message 03: Live for the glory of the Father!

Ephesians is a book about our lives “in Christ”: What we *have* in Christ and how we should *live* in Him.

- The first half of the book (Eph 1-3) is a doctrinal discourse of all God has give us in Christ.
- The second half of the book (Eph 4-6) is a practical exhortation to live according to what we have in Christ.

In Ephesians 1, Paul begins with our beginning: He reminds us of all we received in Christ at salvation.

- We pick up a lot of extra baggage as we live out our lives as Christians in this world (and in churches).
- Not all of that baggage is necessary, and not all that baggage is biblical.
- It's good and it's healthy to do just what Paul is doing in Ephesians: Take a step back, remember what God has give us in Christ (remember the beginning, how it all started).
- And then if there is something we need to lay aside, we should do that so that we can make sure we are walking and living according to our “first love,” Christ.

With this message we start the second major passage of Ephesians 1: (v3-14) Our Blessings in Christ

- In Ephesians 1.1-2, the greeting, we saw Paul's implied exhortation to live as a saint out to live: faithfully!
- In Ephesians 1.3-14, we are going to see eight different aspects of our blessing in Christ.
 - ✓ (v3-6) There are three aspects of our blessing that bring glory to the Father.
 - ✓ (v7-12) There are four aspects of our blessing that bring glory to the Son.
 - ✓ (v13-14) There is one aspect of our blessing that brings glory to the Spirit.

Today we are going to look at what Ephesians 1.3-6 has to say about the glory of God the Father in the blessings we have received in Jesus Christ:

1. (v4) Our Election in Christ: We Have Security
2. (v5) Our Predestination in Christ: We Have Hope and Purpose
3. (v6) Our Acceptance in Christ: We Have Liberty and Confidence

But first, let's talk a little bit about our blessing in general before we get into the specifics...

I. (v3) Our Blessing in Christ: Past Tense, Present Blessing, Future Hope

A. Past Tense: God “hath” blessed us in Christ.

1. The key to the Bible are the words: to understand Scripture, pay attention to the words.
2. Ephesians 1.3 is clear in that it says that God *hath* (past tense) blessed us with *all* spiritual blessings from the moment we were placed in Christ.
3. Therefore, anyone who speaks of some mystical, spiritual “second blessing” is wrong. From the moment of salvation we have *all* the spiritual blessings that there are to be had in Christ.
4. (Col 2.9-10) From the moment you are saved (from the moment you are placed in Christ), you are *complete*, you lack nothing (there is no more blessing to be received because you have it all).

B. Present Blessing: We have all spiritual blessings in Christ today.

1. Again, pay attention to the words (What does the Bible say?): God has blessed us with all spiritual blessing in Christ.
2. Therefore, those that preach a gospel of prosperity (of health and wealth) are wrong. God has given us all spiritual blessings in Christ and that is what we have today.
3. The physical blessings promised us in Christ are yet future...

C. Future Hope: We will also have physical blessings in Christ, starting at the resurrection.

1. (Eph 1.14) The blessings we have received in Christ (the blessing which we have right now, in the present—the spiritual blessings) are just the “down-payment” and “guarantee” (the earnest) of what is yet to come.
2. But the physical blessings are yet future, when Jesus comes back for us, raptures us out of this world, changes our physical bodies (the resurrection, the redemption of our bodies), and places us physically in His presence forever.
3. (Isa 53.5) Many of the prosperity (health and wealth) preachers point to this verse in Isaiah to say that healing is part of our redemption. And it is! But, it's for the future, when God changes our bodies (then we receive the physical blessings in Christ).
4. Today we have all spiritual blessings in Christ and three of those bring glory to the Father...

II. (v4) Our Election in Christ: We Have Security

A. Much confusion exists in Christianity with regard to the Christian's “election” (it started with Augustine and became systematized with Calvin, a disciple of Augustine).

1. Augustine and Calvin said that God has chosen some people to be saved and the rest He has chosen to be condemned. Man has no freewill (no choice); God does it all (i.e., “Monergism”).
2. That's what Augustine, Calvin, and the Calvinists say. Now, what does the Bible say...?

B. First: Whom did God choose, lost people or saved people?

1. The verse says that God has chosen “us”: (v1) Paul and the saints (i.e., Christians).
2. God has chosen the saved, not the lost. If you want to be chosen, you have to be one of “us.”

C. Second: What are we chosen for, salvation or sanctification?

1. We (the saints) are chosen, not for salvation, but rather to be holy and without blame.
2. The Bible could not be more clear than it is with regard to God's will and man's salvation:
 - a) (1Tim 2.3-4) God wants all men everywhere to be saved in the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - b) (1Jn 2.1-2) To this end, Jesus Christ came and died on the cross (for all the sins of all men).
 - c) (John 12.32) To this end, Jesus Christ (His Spirit: John 16.8) is drawing all men to Himself.
 - d) To this end, Jesus Christ has sent us out to preach the Gospel to all men in every nation.
 - e) But, there is one thing God will not do for the lost sinner: (John 3.36) Choose.
3. God will do everything up to the point of decision, and when the sinner decides to repent and place his faith in Christ, God steps back in and “chooses” Him in Christ to be sanctified.
 - (Eph 1.4) If you are saved, you will be holy and without blame before God. God will do that!
4. Because of this election, we have security! (Php 1.6) God will do it in all of us! All those who are in Christ (saved, saints) will be made holy in Christ. Why? Because God chose us to that end!
 - Our election has nothing to do with our salvation. Our election is our eternal security.

III. (v5) Our Predestination in Christ: We Have Hope and Purpose

A. The same confusion exists with “predestination” as with “election.”

1. The Calvinist wants to say that God has certain “elect” that He has predestined to salvation.
2. But the use of “predestinated” in this passage has *nothing* to do with *salvation*.

B. First: Whom did God predestinate, lost people or saved people? “Us”: The saints.

C. Second: Unto what are the saints predestinated, salvation or an inheritance?

1. Our predestination has to do with our adoption (v5) and, therefore, our inheritance (v11).
2. There are two types of adoption mentioned in the Bible.
 - a) We are familiar with one form of biblical adoption: The adoption of a stranger into a family.
 - b) However, there is another kind of adoptions of children born in the family (and that is the adoption mentioned here).
3. First, ask yourself this question: How did we become members of God's family, by birth or by adoption? Obviously, by birth (the new, spiritual birth by the Spirit in Jesus Christ).
 - a) That means, then, that our adoption has *nothing* to do with *becoming* a child of God.
 - b) And that means that we need to do a little more digging in the Bible to learn what the “adoption of children” is (the adoption of children *born* into the family).
4. (e.g., Deut 21.15-17; under the Law) In the Bible (in biblical/Hebrew culture), only the firstborn had the right to inherit his father's kingdom (it's called “the right of the firstborn”).
 - a) (Gen 25.31-33; before the Law) This “right of the firstborn” is what Jacob first took for Esau. Jacob took Esau's “birthright”—that which was Esau's “right” because he was born first.
 - b) (2Chron 21.3) The right of the firstborn (the birthright of the son who was born first) is the kingdom. Other sons might receive “stuff” (blessings), but the *right to rule* over the household of the father passes from the father to his firstborn son.
 - c) (Gen 27.34-36) Jacob took Esau's *birthright* (Gen 27.29; the right to rule over that which his father ruled over—the kingdom) and also Esau's *blessing* (Gen 27.26-28; the “stuff”).
 - d) The important thing to glean for this is that the *firstborn*, and only the firstborn, has the right to receive and inherit his father's kingdom.
5. (Rom 8.29) Among all the sons of God, who is the Firstborn? Christ.
 - Who, therefore, will receive the rule over the kingdom of the Father (all creation)? Christ.
6. How do we, then (as sons of God), receive an inheritance? How do we reign, also?
 - a) We have received the “adoption of children”—we have been legally declared “firstborns,” even though we are not.
 - b) (1Cor 4.5) Every one of us (every son of God) will receive something from the Father.
 - c) (Rom 8.16-17) We are children by birth (v16, born again by the Spirit) and we are “joint-heirs with Christ” (as if we were all God's firstborn)...
 - (1) (v17) Observe: Your inheritance, though guaranteed by your adoption, is *conditional* with regard to *quantity*. The phrase “if so be” makes the glorifying dependent upon the suffering with Christ.
 - (2) (2Tim 2.12a) If we suffering with Christ today (laboring with Him in the mission of making disciples through evangelism and edification), then we will also reign with Him.
 - (3) (2Tim 2.12a) However, if we deny Him today (by choosing not to suffer with Him in the mission), then He will deny us: not salvation, but inheritance (reigning with Him).

D. Just as our election in Christ gives us the security of our salvation, our predestination in Christ gives us hope and purpose.

1. Our *hope* of an inheritance is *sure*: We *will* receive something because we all have received the adoption of sons.
2. Our inheritance, though, also gives our lives *purpose*: God offers you the kingdom! You can reign with the Lord Jesus Christ in glory... if you will but suffer with Him for a time in the mission.
 - (Php 2.21) Sadly, just as most lost people reject God's offer of salvation, most saved people reject God's offer of the reward of the inheritance, choosing rather to live for themselves.

IV. (v6) Our Acceptance in Christ: We Have Liberty and Confidence

- The third and final blessing we are going to look at this morning is this: God accepted us in Christ.

A. Here is another error in Christendom that is corrected by Scripture: We do not “accept Christ.”

1. Calvin and the Calvinists have made their errors over the centuries, and continue to do so. But, the rest of us are not exempt from making mistakes when it comes to doctrine.
2. How many of us have told a sinner that he needs to “accept Christ” in order to be saved, and yet that phrase “accept Christ” is not found anywhere in Scripture (because, frankly, it conveys an idea totally opposite that which the Bible portrays).

B. (Eph 2.12) Outside of Christ, the sinner is not accepted by God.

1. (Ps 5.5; 7.11) What does the Bible say about God's attitude toward lost sinners? He is not “standing at the door their heart asking to come in.” God resists the proud!
2. (Ps 2.12) But, He will give grace to the humble—He (God) will accept the repentant sinner who comes before Him based on the Person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ.
3. We do not “accept Christ.” God accepts us in Christ. We must go before Him as He is: The Lord of all creation whom we have greatly offended with our rebellion and lawlessness. And we plead His mercy and grace and forgiveness... and acceptance because His Son died in our place.

C. (Heb 4.16) In Christ, we are accepted by God and, therefore, we have liberty and confidence to draw near to God always.

1. In Christ, God accepts us *completely* and *without condition*, because our acceptance is *not* based on us or what we do; it is based *solely* on Jesus Christ and what He has already done.
2. We have the liberty now to draw near to God (near to Him whom we offended so greatly before).
3. We can draw near to Him in total confidence (not arrogance, but in meekness and humility, confident in Christ and His work on our behalf).
4. Everyone else will fail you... Everyone else will judge you... Everyone else will poke you in the eye, kick you when you are down, and throw you under the bus... Everyone.
5. But, know this:
 - a) Because of Who Jesus Christ is and because of what Jesus Christ has done... you are accepted by God the Father in Jesus Christ, no questions, no conditions.
 - b) God will *never* fail you; He will *never* reject you. Your acceptance does not depend on you or your works. It depends on Christ and His works.
 - c) If you have the Son, you have Father... forever, always!

Conclusion: (Eph 3.6) The three blessings that glorify the Father...

1. (v4) Our Election in Christ: We Have Security
2. (v5) Our Predestination in Christ: We Have Hope and Purpose
3. (v6) Our Acceptance in Christ: We Have Liberty and Confidence

All of these blessing show us one thing above all else: God is good (all good, always); He is Omnibenevolent, and in Christ He has blessed you beyond what you can imagine.

- Do you know Him? Are you saved? Have you turned from sin and turned to God in Christ?
- If you are saved: (Php 2.21) For whom (what) are you living? For self and selfish “life goals,” or Christ and the mission of being and making disciples of everyone you come into contact with!