

## **We Have Every Spiritual Blessing In Christ**

Ephesians 1:1-10

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### TRANSCRIPT:

Ephesians Chapter 1: Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight. In love, He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will, to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves. In Him, we have received redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.

Friends, let me pray for us, and we'll look at this passage together. Heavenly Father, may the words of my mouth and the meditation of all of our hearts be pleasing in Your sight this morning. Would You bless our time now and help us to comprehend more of Your great love for us in Christ, we ask in Jesus' name, Amen.

Let me ask you a question this morning: What does it look like to be blessed? I read a news article just the other week about a Queensland grandmother who almost fainted after she'd realized that she had won the 50 million dollar Oslotto jackpot. She'd been buying tickets at the same news agency for 30 years, looking to win it big and to be able to finally live the good life. Is that what it looks like to be blessed? I mean, 50 million dollars is nothing to scoff at, right?

Well, I want to invite you this morning to join me in doing something radical. I want to invite you to join me in lifting your eyes off the material realm for just a moment and to gaze up with me at what Paul describes as

the spiritual blessings that Christians have in Christ. What Paul describes as every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms that are yours and mine right now. Now let me warn you, these aren't physical blessings per se. You can't see them; you can't touch them. But dear friends, they are more real and far more valuable than a 50 million dollar lottery ticket. There are four of these spiritual blessings that Paul describes in our passage this morning. So we'll have a look at each of them in turn. Would you turn back with me to verse 4, and we'll look at our first spiritual blessing this morning. Verse 4:

"For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." Blessing number 1 this morning: He chose us. He chose us. This first spiritual blessing that Paul points to that we have in Christ is this: that God chose us before the creation of the world. This word right here in Greek, *eklegomai*, meaning to pick something out or someone out from a larger group. To choose, to select, to pick out with intention. There is no doubt that Paul is pulling this word and this language straight out of the Old Testament. We see God doing this time and time again. You may recall in 2 Chronicles 6, we see that the Lord has said that He would make His name dwell because He chose Jerusalem. He chose Jerusalem for His name to dwell there. In 1 Samuel 10, the Lord is said to have chosen King Saul at the request of the people. 1 Samuel 16, when the sons of Jesse are lined up in a row and the prophet Samuel looks at each of them, three times he says the Lord has not chosen these. It's not until little shepherd boy David is called in from tending the sheep, and he is anointed and chosen, called out from among his brothers to be God's king. Overwhelmingly, though, this language of God's choosing is most frequently used of the people of Israel, God's chosen people. Let me read again for us from Deuteronomy 7, the passage that we had just before. Listen to these words about what God says about His chosen people. Verse 7: "The Lord did not set His affection on you, Israel, and choose you because you were more numerous than other peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples. But it was because the Lord loved you and kept the oath He swore to your ancestors that He brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the land of slavery, from the power of Pharaoh, king of Egypt." See, on this side of the cross today, if you are a follower of Jesus here this morning, it's because God chose you. Before the creation of the world, He called you to Himself. Not because of what you have done, not because of what you will do, or even what you will do in the future. No, He chose you because He loves you. He looked and He saw you before the world was even made, and He said, "You will be mine." Despite the countless sinful, shameful things we think and that we've done, despite our best efforts and our good deeds, before the foundation of the world was even laid, God chose you. And yes, we are those who have chosen to follow the Lord Jesus for ourselves. Yes, we are those who have made real decisions, who have wrestled and weighed

up the cost of being a disciple of the Lord Jesus. Yes, we have. But friends, do you see this morning that behind it all, God first chose us to be His people? As you reflect on your own faith this morning, can you see that there is great comfort to be found here in these words? Because God has chosen us, we can have confidence that He will keep us. Because God has chosen us, we can have full assurance that He who began a good work in us will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. This first spiritual blessing leaves us safe, leaves us secure, and it leaves us protected. Friends, our salvation isn't ultimately dependent on us. Do you see that? God has chosen us before even time began. There is great, great comfort to be found in this truth.

But God's choosing of us begs a bigger question for us here. And that question is why? Friends, why did God choose you? For what purpose has He chosen a people for Himself? Well, verse 4 tells us. Would you look there with me at the end of verse 4? He says, "For He chose us in Him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in His sight." God has chosen us with a very clear purpose in mind. Our Creator and Maker has drawn you to Himself with the express intention that we might live holy and blameless lives for His glory. If you're a Christian here this morning, your life is not your own. You've been chosen by God to live for God. Do you see that? To live a holy and blameless life here and now. The word "holy" simply means set apart, set to one side, different from the world, chosen for a particular purpose, just as our heavenly Father is holy. Later on in this letter to the Ephesians, Paul will outline exactly what he means by living a holy and blameless life. In fact, he'll urge them, saying in chapter 4, verse 1, "I urge you, therefore, brothers, to live a life worthy of the calling you have received." And as he goes on, he will speak about being humble, being gentle, patient, being compassionate, kind, forgiving one another, bearing with one another in love, eagerly maintaining the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace in verse 3. All these kinds of things. Church, can I encourage you this morning, this is you. By God's grace, this is true of the community here at CVBC. Kasia and I haven't been here for very long, but in the time that we have gotten to know most of you through Sunday gatherings and Bible studies and spending time together week after week, we have seen and been so encouraged by these exact qualities overflowing in your lives and in the love that you demonstrate towards one another. It's genuine, it's beautiful, and it's a testament to God's Spirit working in a community of people here who have been called and chosen by Him. This community is bearing the fruit of this first spiritual blessing. For He chose us, not on the basis of anything that we have done, but friends, on the basis of His great love. And it's beautiful. And He has called us to live holy and blameless lives for His glory.

Would you look with me at our second spiritual blessing from verse 5?

Verse 5: "In love, He predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with His pleasure and will, to the praise of His glorious grace, which He has freely given us in the One He loves." A young girl, having grown up in a broken and an abusive household, was adopted into a wealthy, well-to-do family in the UK. As they arrived at the family estate, the young girl's eyes lit up at the mansion that would soon to be her new home. One afternoon, the father walked in the front door and saw the young girl on her hands and knees, scrubbing the marble floors with a sponge and a bucket of soapy water. "Annie," the father said, "you don't have to do that anymore." "But how will I earn my keep, sir?" she replied. "Annie, you're not here to be a servant. You're a part of this family now." If you've seen the Broadway musical "Annie," some of that story may be familiar to you. But I share it, however, because I think it paints a vivid picture for us of this second spiritual blessing this morning. God has chosen us, yes, but He has also adopted us. He's signed the adoption papers, so to speak, not to be a slave, not to be a servant, but a son, a daughter. Slaves and servants don't share in the inheritance like we do. Paul, in his letter to the Romans in chapter 8, says, "Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ." Now if we are children, then we are heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in His sufferings in order that we may also share in His glory.

Friends, we really are God's adopted children. This is the second spiritual blessing. Now, I don't know what kind of family you've grown up with this morning. I don't know what kind of father or kind of mother you've had. I don't know your story. And so, particularly on a day like Mother's Day, we all come with vastly different stories and experiences, don't we? Maybe today is a wonderful time of celebration, marked with deep appreciation and thankfulness, and that's beautiful. But maybe today is one you'd prefer to skip if you could, because it's marked with such brokenness, anxiety, and all kinds of complexity. For some of us, thinking about our mothers only brings pain and sadness. For others, grief and loss are what grip most tightly this morning.

But knowing that these are our stories this morning, friends, can I encourage you, for a moment, would you lift your eyes with me this morning and be reminded of this spiritual blessing in all of its beauty? Church, our Heavenly Father has adopted you into His family, and we are His children. And not only does He call us His children, but He treats us as His children. See, He cares for us. He provides for us. He listens to our prayers. He teaches us. He instructs us. He disciplines us for our good. He is a good, good Father. We really are part of His family. And not only that, listen to what Jesus says to His disciples when Peter points out how much they've given up to follow Him. From Mark Chapter 10, then Peter spoke up: "We have left everything to follow You." "Truly I tell you," Jesus replied, "no one

who has left home or brothers or sisters or mothers or fathers or children or fields for Me and the gospel will fail to receive a hundred times as much in this present age—homes, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and fields, along with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life."

Church, having been adopted into God's family, as you look around the room this morning, do you see your brothers? Do you see your sisters? Do you see mothers and children? You have received what Jesus promised His disciples on that day in the local church. Having given up everything for the sake of Christ and His gospel, you have received adoption into His family and inherited a spiritual family here this morning, along with persecutions, and in the age to come, eternal life. Eternal life. If you have trusted in Jesus, do you have eyes to see the spiritual blessings that you have right now? He has chosen you. He has adopted you to be a son, to be a daughter. There is deep, deep comfort and protection and peace to be found in these truths. Do you have eyes to see them this morning?

And if you're here this morning and you wouldn't call yourself a Christian, you wouldn't call yourself a follower of Jesus, and don't know what it's like to have God as your Father, to be part of a family, I'm so glad you're here. And can I plead with you this morning, would you lift your eyes off of the material realm for a few moments, and would you fix your gaze upward onto what Paul describes as every spiritual blessing that Christians have in the Lord Jesus? For anyone who's willing, He offers an invitation into His family. He offers forgiveness to anyone who's willing to turn away from their wickedness. He offers adoption papers to anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved. Do you know the love of God like this? You won't find it anywhere else. Friends, will you turn to Him this morning and become one of His children? He is a good, good Father. He will not turn you away.

We have been chosen; we have been adopted. Would you look with me at verse 7? Let's look at the third spiritual blessing together. Verse 7: "In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding." He lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. God has chosen us; He has adopted us, and the third spiritual blessing has to do with that word right there: Redemption. Redemption is to pay a price to free someone from bondage. To pay a price to free someone from bondage. You may think of it in these terms: in the Apostle Paul's day, back in the Greco-Roman world, in his part of the world, there were slaves in the Roman Empire. Buying and selling slaves was a very normal and a very common thing. But from time to time, you may see someone in the marketplace that you love, maybe a friend, maybe a family member, and for whatever reason, they are actually being sold into slavery. And so what

you might do is that you might decide to pay the price to purchase their freedom and set them free. To deliver someone from slavery by paying the price. Now, can you hang on to that image for just a moment? Because what I want us to see is that Paul is using this concrete image of paying a price, of paying a price and setting free, to describe something of eternal significance. And it is a spiritual reality.

You see, everyone is in bondage to something. Everyone that comes into the world is a captive, the Bible teaches. We are slaves. No man is free. Every person in the world is a slave within their sinful state. And what are we enslaved to? What has bound us in handcuffs, so to speak? Well, John 8:34 says people are slaves to sin. Romans 6:17 says people are servants to sin. Romans 7:14 says we have been sold as a slave to sin. Our captor is sin itself. And the problem is, sin demands a price to be paid to release its victims. It is only just that we pay the price for our sin, no? And what is that price? Well, again, the Bible teaches us that the wages of sin is death. The price of sin is death. In order to purchase and redeem sinners from the shackles of sin, someone must die. It is only just. Hebrews 9:22 tells us, without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. But here is the third spiritual blessing this morning. Church, what does that passage say? Read it with me from verse 7 again: "In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins." Friends, He has redeemed us. We celebrated it together just before in the Lord's Supper. He has redeemed us. Galatians 1:4, "Jesus Christ gave Himself for our sin to rescue us from the present evil age." Galatians 5:1 says, "For freedom, Christ has set us free." In Romans 6:18, "Having been set free from sin, you have become servants of righteousness." We have been set free from sin, free from darkness, free from the present evil age, by Jesus paying the price that sin demanded. That's redemption. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law and became a curse for us. He died the death. Please hear this. He died the death that you and I should have died to purchase our freedom. Church, do you have eyes to see the spiritual blessing that you have and that belongs to you this morning? You are no longer a slave to sin. You have been purchased with the precious blood of our Savior Jesus. The handcuffs of sin and eternal death that once held us captive have been removed because Jesus paid the price and set us free. Sin is no longer our master. Jesus is. And so I ask you, Church, does your life reflect this reality? Does your life reflect that you are no longer under sin? That you are no longer bound by it? Are you still holding on to the shame and burden and heavy laden with sin? Are you still living as if bound by your old master this morning? When other people look at your life, what do they see? Do they see someone bound by sin? Or do they see a follower of Jesus who stumbles and falls, yes, but do they see a follower of Jesus who has been set free to live a holy and blameless life for His glory?

Friend, please hear this. If you are—if you have come to Christ and given your life to follow Him, your debt has been paid in full. It really has. You have been set free and redeemed out from under slavery to your old master. Don't be deceived. Don't be discouraged. But friends, take heart this morning. God has chosen you. He has adopted you into His family, and He has redeemed you, paying the price for your redemption. The final spiritual blessing that we'll look at this morning is in verse 9. Is in verse 9. And it is a mystery that has been revealed to us. A mystery that has been revealed. Look at it with me from verse 9: "He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ."

You see, many in our world are lost. I'm sure you—I'm sure you've seen this. Many in our world today are lost and trying to make sense of the lives that they are living in this seemingly chaotic world. And they are constantly asking themselves questions like, "Who am I? What am I doing in this life? What should I be doing with my life? What is the meaning of my life? Where can I find true satisfaction and fulfillment?" There really is an overwhelming sense of lostness and loneliness in the world. And the reason that is the case is this: that God and His purposes are a mystery to them. God and His purposes are a mystery to them. See, without God and an understanding of what He has done and is doing in the world, the world seems random. It seems chaotic, pointless even. It doesn't have any direction or meaning, and it never will. For the person that remains ignorant to God and His purposes, there is nothing but spiritual blindness and darkness. The mystery of His will remains a mystery to them. But for those that are in Christ, Paul says that the mystery has been revealed. God has revealed to us the mystery of His very own will. The purpose and meaning of your life and mine, and all of creation and existence, the meaning of it all has been made known to us.

I love how John Stott, a British pastor—he's passed away now—but he put this mystery that has been revealed in these words: "God's plan is that all things, which were created through Christ and for Christ, and which hold together in Christ, will finally be united under Christ. For the New Testament declares Him to be the heir of all things." See, friends, all of reality is heading somewhere. God is at work in bringing everything—everything—under Jesus's rule and reign. Just like a king reigns over a kingdom, everything is being brought under Jesus's rule and reign. We are heading towards a reality where every knee will bow and tongue confess that Jesus is the one and only true king of this world.

And He invites us, as His chosen, redeemed children, to live for Him here and now, and to enjoy Him forever. One day soon, there will be a great

separation of eternal significance. There is a wide gate that leads to destruction, and a narrow way that leads to life. Jesus spoke of Himself as a shepherd who would one day separate the sheep from the goats. And on that final day, there will be those who accepted God's invitation into His family, and those who chose to live for themselves. And for the latter, Jesus will send them away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.

Friends, choose life this morning. History is neither meaningless nor purposeless. It is moving and is on a trajectory toward a final goal. It is inevitable—a real and new life under Jesus. And no, we won't be wispy spirits floating on clouds playing harps somewhere. No, no, we'll be physical beings like we are here and now, but completely free from sin, living and serving and enjoying our great God forever. This wonderful mystery has been made known. We are no longer in darkness. God has opened our eyes to see Him for who He is and what He has done and is doing in our world. He has revealed exactly where all of history and all of time is heading. Friends, this is the fourth spiritual blessing.

Church, do you have eyes to see the spiritual blessing? Church, do you have eyes to see the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ? They are—these blessings are—more real, more tangible, and far more valuable than some 50 million lottery ticket, aren't they? Do you have eyes to see that the God who made the universe has chosen you before the creation of the world? That God, who is a good and perfect Father, has adopted you into His family? That it was His Son, Jesus, who bled and died to pay the price to purchase your redemption? And friends, thanks be to God that He's not left us in the dark but has revealed to us exactly where all of history and all of time is heading under Christ.

These blessings should make our hearts sing, no? These blessings should make our hearts burst with joy and gratitude and thanksgiving. Hold tightly to them. Hold tightly to these precious truths. Take them with you as you go out this morning. Think about them. Pray about them this week. Let them shape your mind and capture your heart as you continue to live a holy and blameless life for our Lord Jesus.

I think it's only appropriate that we should respond to these spiritual blessings in song together, which we'll do in just a moment. But before Josh comes and leads us, friends, would you let me pray? Would you pray with me?

Our Father, we praise and thank You for choosing, for adopting, for redeeming, and making known to us all that You have done through Your Son, the Lord Jesus. And we pray for eyes to see and hearts to appreciate these spiritual blessings in more depth and beauty. Would You let the



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truths we've looked at this morning draw out our affections towards You as we sing Your praises now and live holy lives and blameless lives for Your glory. And for the Son, in whose name we pray, Amen.