

Glorious Grace (2)

Ephesians 1:3-14

“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 to be adopted as His sons 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 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. And 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 will have reached their fulfillment--to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of Him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of His will, in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of His glory. And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession--to the praise of His glory.”

Definition of grace ...

Grace is the unmerited favor of God and is the basis of our salvation, justification, predestination, adoption, forgiveness and the gift of the Holy Spirit. All these spiritual blessings listed here are unmerited and undeserved given to unworthy sinners who have broken God's commandments and laws and deserve only hell and damnation.

Last week we considered...

- In Christ (verse 3)
- Chosen in Him (verse 4)
- Holy and Blameless (verse 4)

Verse 5, Predestined

God decided and determined before hand that those who believe in Christ will be adopted into His family and conformed to His Son.

This predestination involves a choice on God's part.

- It is done in Love (verse 4)
- It is based on the good pleasure of His perfect will (verse 5)
- Its purpose is to glorify God (verse 12, 14)
- But it does not relieve man of his responsibility to believe the Gospel in order to bring to pass personally God's predestination (verse 13)

Verse 5, Adopted – through Jesus Christ

The act of God that places the believer in His family as an adult son and daughter. At the same time he is born into the family of God as a child who needs to grow and develop. His position is one of full privilege. His practice involves growth in grace. Adoption is a legal transfer of a child from one family. Adoption had no place in Jewish law, but it was quite possible under Roman law. Adoption has the idea of privilege and not nature. Our sonship therefore does not rest in the natural relationship in which men stand before God as His creation. But in a new relationship through grace actualized in the work of Christ. In this spiritual sense adoption means the acceptance into the family of God of those who do not by nature belong to it.

Verse 7, In Him – Redemption

Redemption involves three things:

Paying the ransom with the blood of Christ.

This word redemption means to ‘release on ransom’. It was used in buying back a slave or captive, making him free by payment of a ransom.

Hebrews 9:15, *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance--now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

Removal from the curse of the Law. Galatians 3:13

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree."

Release from the bondage of sin in the freedom of Grace. 1 John 3:5

But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

Redemption is always through the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 7, The forgiveness of sins

In accordance with the riches of God’s grace.

The word forgiveness means ‘letting go’, ‘setting aside’, ‘remission’, ‘not exacting payment’. When God forgives he actually remits our sin. Our responsibility for it ceases. The guilt is no longer ours.

Colossian 1:13 *“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins”*

Verse 8, Mystery of His will

This is not something mysterious but something unknown until revealed.

The mystery spoken of here is not that the gentiles would be blessed – for that was predicted in the Old Testament – But that the gentiles and Jews would be equal heirs in one body of Christ. This was unknown in the OT Prophecy but was revealed by the Apostles.

In Christ there no Jew or Gentile, no black or white, no male or female, no rich or poor, no slave of free man. We are all one in Christ.

Verse 12, For the praise of His glory

This is the ultimate purpose of all these spiritual blessings – the Glory of God. You were also included, when you heard the Gospel, verse 13.

Verse 13, Having believed – you were sealed.

The time of sealing coincides with the time of believing.

A seal indicates Possession and Security. The presence of the Holy Spirit is the believer's guarantee of the security of salvation. It is described as a Deposit or Down payment from God. The presence of the Holy Spirit is God's pledge that our salvation will be consummated and last for ever and ever.

First we heard the Word of God. Then we believed in Christ and His redemptive work on the cross and finally we are sealed by God with the Holy Spirit of promise.

In New Testament times letters, contracts and official papers were first fastened with a blob of warm wax and then the signer pressed his identification into it.

To be sealed means be declared genuine. John Wesley says that the sealing seems to imply a full impression of the image of God on our souls. This sealing results in a God-like quality of spirit. To be sealed by the Holy Spirit means to be possessed or owned entirely by the Spirit of God. When we surrender ourselves completely to Christ, we belong to Him and are no longer our own property. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit as a sign that we belong no more to ourselves but to God.

UNDER NEW MANAGEMENT.