

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

Loved, Chosen and Accepted

Ephesians 1:3-6

1998

Introduction

The greatest need in our lives: Love and acceptance

These twin needs drive our lives, either for good or evil.

Before we came to know God's love and acceptance, we sought it through people or things, resulting in emptiness, hypocrisy, phoniness, sin, pain. Now that we have love and acceptance in Christ, we can be ourselves: open, transparent, loving.

After his brief salutation (1:1-2) of his traditional twin greetings of Grace and Peace, Paul immediately begins in 1:3 in a state of "controlled ecstasy" by praising God for the blessings (or riches) we have in Christ...

- a. This "doxology" continues throughout verses 4-14
- b. Although your Bible has included punctuation, verses 3-14 were one sentence of praise.
- c. The spiritual "blessings" that are mentioned in this passage can be outlined as:
 - 1) Blessings involving the Father (4-6)
 - 2) Blessings involving the Son (7-12)
 - 3) Blessings involving the Holy Spirit (13-14)

I The Believer's Spiritual Blessings (1:3)

A. The source of our blessings

1. They originate from the Father

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

Jam 1:17 "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights"

2. They emanate from the riches of:

a. God's grace

Eph 1:7 "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace..."

Eph 2:7 "... in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

b. God's kindness

Eph 2:7 "... in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus."

B. The scope of our blessings

1. They include "every" spiritual blessing

Rom 8:32 "He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all-- how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?"

C. The sphere of our blessings

1. They are "in the heavenly realms"

a. Literally, "in the heavenlies", a phrase found only in Ephesians - 1:3; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12

b. Referring to the spiritual realm, as opposed to the physical

c. This is where Christ is now seated in the heavenly places

Eph 1:19-21 "That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come."

2. They are "in Christ"

a. "In Christ" occurs 27 times in this epistle

c. Emphasizing that it is only by being "in" Christ that one can have access to "every" spiritual blessing.

With verse three, then, we have the "theme" of this epistle - "In Christ"

2 Cor 5:17 "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"

John 15:4-5 "Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. "I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."

II The Blessings Of The Father (1:4-6)

A. Chosen by God (1:4)

Chosen = eklegomai = "to pick or choose out for one's self"

This is related to the idea of "election" which comes from ekloge, meaning "the act of picking out, choosing"

Deut 7:6 "For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you out of all the peoples on the face of the earth to be his people, his treasured possession."

1 Pet 1:1-2 "Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, To God's elect, strangers in the world ... who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by his blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance."

1 Pet 2:9 "But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Illustration: Marriage partner

1. The time of His choice

a. "Before the creation of the world"

II Th 2:13-14 "But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Matt 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'"

2. The objects of His choice - US!!

Those who believe

3. The purpose of His choice

The goal of God's choice in eternity was to produce a people in Christ Jesus who would be:

a. That we would be "holy" - set apart for a special purpose

Holy = "Set apart for a special purpose" - in order to reflect His purity

Rom 8:29 "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers."

1Thes 4:7 "For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life."

1 Pet 1:15-16 "But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

b. That we would be without blame

Without blame = Free from blemish (reference to OT sacrifices)

Col 1:22 "But now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation ..."

2 Pet 3:13-14 "But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, the home of righteousness. So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him."

1 Cor 1:8 "He will keep you strong to the end, so that you will be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

B. Predestined by God (1:5-6a)

Predestined = To predetermine, decide beforehand

1. The subjects of God predestination

a. Paul simply says "us" the church

Rom 8:29-30 "For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified."

Eph 1:11-12 "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 while this choice is unconditional and final, we must be "diligent to make our calling and election sure" - 2 Pet 1:10

As Chuck Smith says, "If you are saved then you were predestined."

You may say then, " have no choice!"

"No, you do have a choice! You could choose today to believe in and receive Jesus Christ as your Savior and you would be predestined."

2. The purpose of God's predestination

a. To adopt us as His sons

1. God has "foreordained that we, the church of Jesus Christ, should be adopted as his children."

Jesus is God's Son by nature

We are God's sons/daughters by means of adoption

Under Roman Law, adopted children enjoyed the same status and privileges of the natural children.

Enjoying the privileges and benefits enjoyed by the natural Son

Gal 4:4-5 "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, to redeem those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons."

John 1:12-13 "Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God."

Rom 8:23 "Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies."

3. The motivation of God's predestination
 - a. His pleasure and will

Phil 2:13 "for it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his good purpose."

Eph 1:11-12 "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."

- b. Putting it simply, the idea "pleased" God!
 1. It is something He wanted to do
 2. And by His Divine Will He has made it possible!

What should our reaction be to all this?

To praise God for His glorious grace!

For it is His "grace" by which we can now be...

- C. Accepted by God (1:6b)
 - Freely given (NIV) Accepted (KJV)

Accepted = *Begraced* = To be highly favored; to peruse with grace, compass with favor; to honor with blessings

It is used in Lk 1:28 in reference to the virgin Mary ("highly favored one")
Like Mary, those in Christ are "highly favored" in God's sight!

Rom 3:22-24 "This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus."

Rom 8:1 "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ..."

1. The basis of our acceptance
 - a. In the One He loves
 1. As emphasized in 1:3 and throughout verses 4-14, all these blessings are "in" and "by" Jesus Christ:
 - a. God chose us "in Him (Christ)" - 1:4
 - b. God predestined us to adoption as sons "by Jesus Christ" - 1:5
 - c. God has made us accepted "in the Beloved (Christ)" - 1:6

Therefore it is by our being "in" Christ that we are privileged to be "highly favored" by God, and showered by these wonderful blessings!

Conclusion

1. God has loved you
2. God has chosen you
3. God has predestined you
4. God has accepted you

And what should our reaction be?

- a. To praise God for His glorious grace!

Eph 1:3 "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."
- b. Offering such praise is a form of "spiritual sacrifice" by which we can say "thank you!" - cf. He 13:15

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