

Our Riches in Christ Ephesians 1:1-3

INTRO: With this message, we embark on a spiritual journey through the book of Ephesians. Ephesians has been called “the crown and climax of Pauline theology.” Ephesians is a majestic expression of the Gospel. Ephesians is a spiritually rich book written to a group of believers who are inexpressibly rich in Christ, but living a beggarly existence because they are ignorant of their spiritual wealth.

The book of Ephesians is divided into two sections:

1. Chapters 1-3 describe what the Christian has in his spiritual bank account: adoption, acceptance, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom, inheritance, the Holy Spirit, life, grace, peace, etc.
2. Chapter 4-6 have been described as an orthopedic clinic where the Christian learns to walk spiritually. These chapters deal with the practice of the Christian: his responsibilities and behavior.

If you want your life to change, study Ephesians. This book will change you.

I. VS. 1, PAUL AND THE SAINTS

A. “Paul” is the author of this epistle. The Hebrew is Saul, Latin Paulus, Greek Paulos. All internal and external evidence supports Pauline authorship.

1. “An apostle of Jesus Christ.”
 - a. Christ’s possession and His representative (Gal. 1:15-16). Paul never got over the grace of God and the calling of God upon his life.
 - b. Saved and sent by the risen Lord. Apostle means one sent forth.
2. “By the will of God.” The general theme of the book is given to us in the first verse. The theme is God and His will. As we read the first three verses of this epistle, we see that God is the emphasis. Paul was an apostle by the will of God.
 - a. The first chapter of Ephesus is loaded with the theme-God and His will (vss. 5,6,9,11). We are brought face to face with God in Ephesians.
 - b. Paul begins with God and that is where we need to start. “This is the theme that controls everything else”

(Jones 13).

- 1.) When we forget that it is all of God, we get self-centered, and we become miserable.
- 2.) Let our emphasis be on God: the eternal God, the everlasting God, self-sufficient in Himself.
 - a.) It is God who chose us (1:4).
 - b.) It is God who predestinated us (1:5).
 - c.) There would have been no salvation if God had not planned it (John 3:16; Eph. 1:11).

B. "To the saints."

1. Every Christian is a saint. "Saint" comes from the Greek word for holy. As saints, we are to be holy, different, distinct, having a different lifestyle. Does that surprise you? Nine times in this epistle Paul calls his readers saints, believers in Christ.
2. Saints are those who have been set apart to glorify God. In our troubles, trials, disturbances, and problems, we are saints by grace; and His grace is sufficient.
3. "And to the faithful." The Greek word for faithful is *Pistos* meaning "believers." A true Christian can not quit! The folks at Ephesus were saints because they believed the Gospel (1:12-13).

C. "In Christ Jesus." What a joy it is to be "in Christ Jesus." As a believer, "your life is hid with Christ in God" (Col 3:3). It is because we are in Christ that we can be called "saints and believers." The phrase "in Christ" or its equivalent is found over and over in Ephesians. The believer is:

1. In Christ (1:1),
 2. In the heavenly places (1:3),
 3. Chosen in Him (1:4),
 4. Adopted through Christ (1:5)
 5. In the beloved (1:6)
 6. Redeemed through His blood (1:7)
 7. Made alive together with Christ (2:5),
 8. Raised and seated with Him (2:6),
 9. Brought near by His blood (2:13).
- and on and on we could go! All that we have spiritually is because of Christ Jesus.

II. VS. 2, GRACE AND PEACE

- A. Paul wrote to those who had received grace. The Greek word for grace here is *charis* referring to God's unmerited favor in action. Our English word charms comes from this Greek word. Christians are to be loving, pleasant, kind, and caring. Too many so called Christians are mean and unlovely.
 - 1. Grace is the kindness of God toward undeserving sinners.
 - 2. Grace is getting what we do not deserve. Because we have grace we have:
 - a. Salvation- Eph. 2:8, "For by grace are ye saved...."
 - b. Justification- Rom. 3:24, "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:"
 - c. Victory over sin- Rom. 5:20, "...where sin abounded, grace did much more abound."
- B. Peace always follows grace.
 - 1. God does not offer peace apart from grace. Grace is the fountain, and peace is the stream of spiritual blessings.
 - 2. Only the believer can experience the peace spoken of here. It is the peace that passes all understanding.
 - 3. Peace is a sense of security; it is trust. Trust is not knowing but still being at rest.
- C. Grace and peace have their origin in God the Father and have been merited for the believer by our Prophet, Priest, and King, our Lord, Master, Owner, Conqueror, and Savior, Jesus. Who "is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by Him" (Heb. 7:25)

III. VS. 3, WHAT EPHESIANS IS ABOUT

- A. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..."
 - 1. Paul ascribes to God the honor He is due for spiritual blessings—past, present, and future:
 - a. Past- elect in "chosen in Him" (1:4)
 - b. Present- redemption- "redemption through His blood" (1:7).
 - c. Future- inheritance - "we have obtained an inheritance" (1:11).
 - 2. "Blessed be" means that we are to acknowledge God in our thoughts, words, and deeds. What comes from God must go back to Him.
 - a. We are to acknowledge Him enthusiastically.

- b. “The lofty terms in which he (Paul) extols the grace of God toward the Ephesians are intended to rouse their hearts to gratitude, to set them all on flame, to fill them even to overflowing with this disposition” (Calvin).
 - 3. The title “God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ....” calls attention to the Son’s divine nature.
- B. “Spiritual blessings...”
 - 1. Believers are blessed folks.
 - 2. Through Christ we are blessed with spiritual riches:
 - a. Rich in God’s grace- 1:7; 2:7,
 - b. Rich in God’s glory- 1:18; 3:16,
 - c. Rich in God’s mercy- 2:4.
 - 3. All spiritual blessings are ours, we who were bankrupt spiritually have had all spiritual blessings added to our account. These are unsearchable riches (3:8). Unsearchable means past finding out.
 - a. All of our needs are supplied “according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus” (Phil. 4:19).
 - b. To me the greatest of all spiritual blessings is salvation through the blood of Jesus Christ. Knowing that He died for me, was buried, and arose on the third day.
- C. “In heavenly places.”
 - 1. Spiritual blessings are heavenly in their origin, and then these blessings descend to believers on earth.
 - 2. The believer, by his new nature, belongs in heaven; and by grace he is spiritually, positionally, seated there (2:6). The lost have no seat in heaven.
- D. “In Christ.” The name Christ here refers to the risen Christ.
 - 1. God’s spiritual blessings are reserved for those who are God’s children through faith in His Son.
 - 2. “In Christ” denotes the oneness of Christ and His people.
 - 3. Apart from Him we can do nothing and are nothing. We amount to nothing spiritually.

CONCLUSION: When Queen Victoria was young, she was shielded from the fact that she would be the next Queen of England. When her teacher finally told her, she would one day be Queen she replied: “Then I will be good.”

The life of Victoria was controlled by her position. No matter where she was Victoria was lead by the fact that she sat upon the throne of England. The child of God should be controlled by his position in Christ.

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