

*We exist to make disciples who delight in God and make Him known  
by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ.*

## ***Praise God for Our Election*** ***Ephesians 1:3-4***

**Keywords:** Praise, Thankfulness, Election, Sovereignty, Sin, Blessings

**PowerPoint Presentation included:** NONE

**SermonAudio Blurb:** Paul immediately brings his readers into an invitation to praise God for the great things which He has done for and to them. He begins with the humbling doctrine of election and moves to the hope-filled doctrine of adoption. And then shows us the purpose for all of this, that we might be a people who praise God.

### **I. Introduction.**

- A. After giving a very short blessing Paul moves into a very unique section known as a *berakah*.
1. No other New Testament letter opens like it does here in Ephesians.
  2. 3-14, to remind you, is a single sentence that seamlessly takes the saints and faithful from eternity past to eternity future (vs 4 with vs 14).
  3. It's function and purpose in this letter is important to understand. It serves to form the identity of the people of God (Gombis, 67).
  4. But it also shows us God's sovereign plan on how to redeem all of creation through Jesus Christ. You see this explicitly in vss 9-10.
  5. This moves us again to the idea of our union with Jesus.
    - a. What I want you to understand is that we are not merely loved by God. He did not merely save you or forgive you.
    - b. Rather we are brought into the realm of God. Which honestly we cannot fathom.
    - c. But this is how we are moved out of Adam and this fallen age and into the new creation.
    - d. Romans 6:3-8, 23.
    - e. Ephesians 2:5-7.
    - f. And as you try to get your head around this concept you will realize that you really are no longer enslaved to sin nor can the powers and

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principalities you fight against ever truly conquer you. They do not belong to that realm and will never be in it.

- g. This, then, opens up a whole new set of options and opportunities for how we live. It affects our actions and words, not to mention our motives and relationships.
- h. If you desire this sort of transformation then pay close attention to this section. Own it as what God has done for you.
  - (1) Turn it into prayers.
  - (2) Learn to see it as true for those you struggle with but who are also in Christ.
- 6. What he invites us all to do is to look at what God has done and how they fit into God's vision and purpose for reality.
- 7. We are to see these mind-blowing acts of God as His glorious gifts to us. He places His acts on display and then calls us to give Him praise and thanks.
  - a. Notice this is seen in vs 6, 12 and 14.
  - b. So what we have is an invitation to praise God. We should desire to sing and sing loud when we read this massive sentence.
- B. This brings a very important and natural reality that we must recognize. It is "Mission."
  - 1. We find that God gives himself up for the redemption of this world. The Father sent the Son into this world and because we are "in Christ" we too are being sent into this world.
  - 2. This means we cannot see the Church as a group of people who huddle up and avoid the world. Nor do we congratulate ourselves for having met God's standards
  - 3. Rather, the Church is to gather together for strength and equipping so that then as individuals She can wander back into the world to do good, to show and speak of Christ.
  - 4. It means asking how we are a blessing in the community and how do we seek to be redemptive.
- C. So as we plunge right into the deep end of theology do it with a heart that is filled with anticipation to see the depth and fulness of the glory of God in the salvation of sinners through Jesus Christ.

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## II. Let Us Praise God!

### A. The blessedness of God (3).

1. We praise God because He has first blessed us. For the Christian we should learn to see that we are always reacting to what God has already done for us.
  - a. Consider prayer. We pray because He has opened access to His presence through Jesus.
  - b. Consider holy living. First, we seek holiness because Jesus is our holiness. Second, we obey because He has given us the Holy Spirit to empower us in this effort.
  - c. Consider giving. We give because God has already enriched us.
2. This term "blessedness" always is used toward God in the New Testament. It is used to praise God as creator (Romans 1:25, as the Father of our Lord Jesus (2 Corinthians 1:3 and here), as being the One who is over all (Romans 9:5) and again here in the sheer magnitude of His salvation.
  - a. "blessed" primarily is used of the praise of people. To give a good word. We get the word "eulogy" from it.
  - b. Paul uses it here to speak of the good things that God does for His people. So the good word is what God does for us to the praise of His Glory.
3. He uses three prepositions to then explain and flesh out the cause for this praise.
  - a. "with every spiritual blessing."
    - (1) Note the comprehensiveness of this statement. Nothing is left out. Every spiritual blessing that could be ours is ours.
    - (2) When you notice the term 'spiritual' and 'heavenly' it is tempting to think of these as blessings that are immaterial but this is not correct. W
    - (3) hen you think of 'spiritual' train yourself to think of the presence of the Holy Spirit.
    - (4) Example is Ephesians 5:19, "spiritual songs" are not immaterial songs but those infused with the power and presence of the Spirit. So spiritual blessings are the benefits that come as gracious gifts from the Spirit of God.

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- b. "In the heavenly places."
  - (1) It is not Heaven but rather the other half of reality that I spent three weeks on. That dimensions of existence that is the domain of the angels, demons, and God.
  - (2) Heavenly realms is an expression exclusive to Ephesians. It is employed for both the sphere of God (1.3, 20; 2.6) and Christ (3.10; 6.12) and it is the location of the evil 'principalities and powers (3.10; 6.12).
  - (3) This is not some gnostic idea of higher/spiritual vs lower/physical. Rather it is the notion of several 'heavens' (4.10). Christ has ascended above all the heavens (4.10) and sits at God's right hand in the heavenly places 'far above all rule and authority'.
- c. "In Christ" He has chosen to bring us into full fellowship and full attainment of all blessings.
  - (1) If you are in Christ that you reside where these blessings are yours to the fullest. If you are not in Christ then none of these are yours ever. The means to become in Christ is to place your trust in Jesus alone to be your source of forgiveness and to see Him as Lord over all.
  - (2) The purpose is to point out that God has chosen to reveal himself and his renewing of creation through Jesus Christ.
  - (3) Jesus is the agent, if you will, of all of God's redemptive work. You see this clearly in 1:10.

*Transition*

Up to now the idea of God blessing us is rather vague and undefined. But Paul immediately begins to bring into focus the majestic massiveness of this blessing in verse 4 and it is marked by the phrase 'just as' or 'even as'.

- B. His basis for this blessing: His sovereign election (4).
  - 1. First it is good to get these pronouns cleared up. . .
  - 2. God chose us. This is the only verb in the whole sentence that is not grammatically subordinate to something else. It stands supreme as the primary expression of God's magnificent blessing of His people.

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3. Two phrases help capture the glory and the mystery of this election. The first is 'in him' and the second is 'before the foundation of the world'. It was not some vague choice but the sovereign choice to place His elect in Christ.
  - a. 'In him' speaks to the totality of all things are necessarily connected to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the foundation of our election and all that follows that election. It all depends on Him.
  - b. 'Before the foundation of the world'.
    - (1) Paul's mind reaches back before creations, before time began, into eternity in which only God himself existed. We see this idea of election/choosing throughout the bible.
    - (2) We see it with Noah finding favor with God.
    - (3) Then with Abraham being chosen to become the father of Israel and the father of all who believe.
    - (4) Then we see the explicit language of Deuteronomy 7:6-8 " For you are a holy people to the LORD your God; the LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for His own possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. 7 "The LORD did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, 8 but because the LORD loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the LORD brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt."
  - c. This means that the Fall of mankind was not some mistake.
  - d. The removes any aspect of human choice or merit.
    - (1) This doesn't mean we don't need to make the choice to love and trust Jesus and what he has done on the Cross.
    - (2) But it does mean that our choice that occurs in time and space follows a decision made when there was no time or space, only God.
  - e. And it is here that we wade into deep waters that can easily sweep us away if we are not careful.
- C. A basic introduction to the necessity and mystery of God's sovereign election.

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1. The necessity is wrapped up in our sinfulness and inability to reach out to God.
  - a. Our sinfulness declared:
    - (1) Ephesians 2:1-3.
    - (2) Romans 8:5-8.
  - b. The effects of this sinfulness declared:
    - (1) Genesis 6:5.
    - (2) Romans 1:18ff.
    - (3) Ephesians 4:17-19
  - c. Add to this the fact that Satan actively attacks and blinds unbelievers as taught in the introductory sermons and you have utter hopelessness and helplessness.
2. The reality of God's election as described by Jesus.
  - a. John 6:37, 44-45, 64-65.
  - b. John 10:24-29.

### **III. Conclusion.**

- A. We now turn back to Ephesians 1:4 to bring this all to a final point. What is the point of this election?
- B. And the answer is simple and straight-forward, to be holy and blameless.
- C. Therefore before sin had entered into the world. Before the world was made God ordained that those he chose would be a holy people.
  1. This is speaking of both being separated out for His purposes but also in a moral sense of being pure and righteous.
  2. And you will see this throughout Ephesians. Consider 4:17-20.
  3. Election and habitual sin are incompatible with each other.
- D. We are to be a humble people for our salvation is wholly of God.
- E. We are to be a grateful people for we have infinite blessings from God.
- F. We are to be a gospeling people who call others to come to Jesus Christ with the comfort of knowing those who are His shall respond.

# M i s s i o      D e i      F e l l o w s h i p

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- G. We are to be a holy people who reflect the character of Jesus Christ in whom we have our salvation.