

# Ephesians: Good News of the Church

## Ephesians 1:1-14

"Blessed in Christ"— August 28, 2022



### **Introduction**

Today, "spirituality" is popular, but the church is seen as unimportant. For many, the church is just a bunch of boring, lifeless, empty traditions. Others assume that the church is close-minded and judgmental, filled with hypocrites. Sadly, we must admit that there are times when churches have hurt people, dishonored Christ, or looked more like the world than they are called to look like the people of God. But scripture puts the church at the center of God's plan.

The emphasis in the book of Ephesians is not on a private Gospel for individual salvation but a Gospel of the church - God in Christ, creating a new community made of Jews and Gentiles living together as a new community - a new people - who are distinct from the world in which we live. We need to go back to the scriptures and understand what God's design is for the local church, so we can live together in the way that He has called us to - God's people living for His glory and for the evangelization of the world.

Paul writes this letter to encourage the church in Ephesus, a secular city. The Christians there were outnumbered and hated. They dealt a lot with spiritual discouragement, fear of man, and envy of the prosperity of man. They would have been tempted to be ashamed of Christianity and Jesus. Do you feel that temptation today as a Christian living in America - a secular culture that is often hostile to Christianity?

### **Sermon Outline**

1. God the Father chose us before creation. Vs. 4-6
2. God the Son redeems us today. Vs. 7-10
3. God the Holy Spirit guarantees our future inheritance. Vs 11-14

### **Read & Discuss**

#### **1) Read vs. 4-6**

In vs. 1 – 3 Paul encourages the church about the character of God. God is blessed and worthy of honor and praise because He blesses us! The benefit for the believer is receiving Christ Himself. Once separated from God, we are now united because of what Jesus did. The Christian finds confidence when we walk by faith, taking God at His word. We are often afraid when we only have eyes to see our physical circumstances. What current circumstances are tempting you to be afraid?

Beginning in vs. 4 Paul is giving us a glimpse of the spiritual blessings.

Paul begins by laying out the doctrine of divine election. Before you or I ever existed, before the world was created, God chose you. God decided beforehand who would be His. This is a reason to praise God because left to ourselves, you and I would not choose God. ([Ephesians 2:1](#)) Physically, we are alive, but we are spiritually dead - unresponsive to the things of God. The origin of our trust in God is found in God's action, His gracious purpose, His divine will.

Why did God choose you? He chose you because He loves you. In our pride, we push against that. We think there must be a reason within us that God chose us, but His election is unconditional. The reason for God's love is not because something in us was lovable. We are trophies of His grace.

This doctrine raises some questions:

-What about free will? Our choices and or preferences are really our own. We do what we want, but our choices always align with our nature. In the same way, sin has had such an effect on us that we will always choose to sin. Unless we are set free by God's intervention, we will not choose God. Can you remember the time before you were a Christian? What did your choices reflect?

-How is this fair? What we deserve and what God owes us is death. [Romans 6:23](#)

-What about evangelism? Our task in evangelism is like going into a grave yard to the spiritually dead. We proclaim the good news and the Holy Spirit opens eyes to truth. This sets us free in evangelism. We pray and share the good news - the rest is up to God. How does understanding that you are the messenger in evangelism encourage you to share the gospel more?

It pleased God to adopt us into His family. We went from being strangers and enemies to being friends of God. We are children of the King!

**Additional Reading:** 2 Kings 6; Ezekiel 37, Romans 9

## **2) Read vs. 7-10**

The word for redemption in verse 7 means "deliverance by payment of a price." We were slaves to sin, but Christ set us free by paying the price of redemption through His blood. It is the rescue from God's just judgment for our sin. Redemption and forgiveness is according the riches of His grace which He lavished on us! He delights to do this.

We want to self-justify and work for our salvation, but God says that in Christ you are fully loved, forgiven, set free, justified. Our justification is paid in full. Are you resting in that truth?

Our church is filled with testimonies of God's grace. This is a preview of the day that God unites things under His good rule. When Jesus returns, He will judge sin and unite all things under His rule. His delay is to give us time to hear the good news and come to Him. ([2 Peter 3:9](#)) If you don't trust in Christ, that day will be a day of judgement for the sinner.

Is there someone you can encourage by sharing your testimony of God's grace in your life?

## **3) Read vs. 11-14**

The day that God unites all things together in Christ will be glorious. Sin will be no more. Satan and his demons will be cast out. There will be perfect peace. That is the inheritance that we will receive when Jesus returns. We get a taste of that now in our relationship with God.

We are sealed with the Holy Spirit. God is the Creator and Owner of all things. He is able to keep you because He is sovereign, pulling all things together for your good. You may not see it now, but it is true for those in Christ. It pleases God to lavish His grace on us. He is not reluctant. It gives Him joy! It is His amazing grace on display for the world to see. To those intimidated by the world - Jesus says, "Fear not; little flock, for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." ([Luke 12:32](#)) How do the words of Jesus give you hope in the midst of trying or discouraging circumstances?

## **Prayer of Response**

1) After hearing God's Word, what sin do I need to *confess*? From what do I need to *repent*?

2) How should my life be lived this week based on what I have heard? What should I *understand, believe, desire, or do*?

Spend time praying together in response to God's word asking for His help and greater faith to follow Him in the week to com.

If you missed the sermon on Sunday or would like to listen again, visit our website at <https://fbcum.org/sermons-new/>

<b>*Next week's sermon text:</b> we turn to <a href="#">Ephesians 1:15-23</a> "The Head of the Church"
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