

The Book of Ephesians
Ephesians 1:4
Session Five: Spiritual Blessings

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:
⁴According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: ⁵Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, ⁶To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

In vs. 4, we notice that our spiritual blessings are “according” to something. According to what?

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:
⁴According as he hath chosen

Those blessings are according to, (which means they are: in agreement with or fitting, or appropriate to), something God has chosen in the past.

Who did He choose it for?

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:
⁴According as he hath chosen us

He chose it for “us.” Who is the “us?” Well, our first indicator is in vs. 1; that Paul is referring to the saints which are at Ephesus and the faithful in Christ Jesus. And that would be true, but there is a qualifier for the “us” sitting in the verse.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:
⁴According as he hath chosen us **in him**

What does “in Him” mean? It means, “in Christ.” We know that every person in this DoGG who has trusted Jesus Christ as their all-sufficient Savior is “in Christ.”

We learned this back in Romans when we learned our new identity in Christ in connection with our justification.

Now, if we only read the verse up to here, it appears that Paul might be saying that God chose us to be in Christ. But, as the sentence unfolds, we will see this is not the case. The “in Him” is not the object, of what we were chosen to, but it is a qualifier to describe who the “us” is.

Think of this phrase: I fire writers...

The first thing you think of is that someone terminates writers employment; they fire them from their job. But, if I complete the sentence:

I fire writers to write exciting books!

Well, that changes the whole meaning of the sentence. That is what is about to happen in these verses.

What you will see is that the “in Him” is the qualifier for “us” which gives the sense of saying it this way: “According as he hath chosen *us* who are *in him*...

So what do we have so far? Our spiritual blessings are according to something God has already chosen, for those of us, who are “in Christ,” i.e., he has chosen it for the entire body of Christ. And when did God choose this?

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:
⁴According as he hath chosen us in him **before the foundation of the world...**

He chose something for us, who are in Christ, before the foundation of the world.

Again, if you just stopped there, then the Calvinist could make a case for election. If you don’t finish the sentence, it looks like Paul is saying that before the foundation of the world, God chose us to be in Christ, that God chose us to be saved, implying that those who are not “in Christ” are not because God did not choose them.

But, the sentence does not stop there. Again, this is not describing what God chose. What Paul will do next is tell us what God chose for us who are in Christ. So, what did God choose?

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:

⁴According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, **that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:**

We are going to see what it means for us to be “holy and without blame before Him in love,” but first, we need to pay attention to the grammar. See that word “that?” The word “that” sets off what God chose. God did not choose us to be “in Him” before the foundation of the world; God chose for those who are “in Him” to be holy and without blame before Him in love.

Just do the grammar. What has God chosen? You say, God has chosen “us.” No, “us” is the indirect object. What God has chosen is that we should be holy and without blame... If you make “us” what God was choosing, then the rest of verse 4 doesn’t even make sense.

Example: On vacation, Mark chartered us a boat. What did Mark charter; us? No, he didn’t rent us. He rented a boat. “Us,” is who Mark chartered the boat for.

God did not choose who would be in Christ. He chose those who are in Christ to be holy and without blame before Him. And if you don’t get that straight, then you just closed the door on one of the biggest spiritual blessings that God the Father has given you.

So, what did God choose us to? Verse 4 says that those who are “in Christ” have been chosen (before the foundation of the world) to a standing before Him, holy and without blame.

God did not choose for people to be saved. He chose for those who are in Christ to be “holy and without blame before Him in love.” And since the Ephesians are “in Christ,” that is to say, they are already JUEL, then Paul wants them to know

that because they are in Christ, God has chosen to bestow a particular spiritual blessing upon them; to be holy and without blame before Him in love.

So what does it mean to “be holy and without blame before him in love” and why should we care about it? To be holy and blameless sounds a whole lot like the opposite of who people are. You have to wonder how sinners can be holy and without blame before God, but this is part of the mystery of Christ.

The answer is that this is talking about a positional truth, not a practical truth.

Paul does sometimes talk about practical sanctification, such as in Colossians 1.

Colossians 1:27 To whom God would make known what *is* the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: ²⁸ Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; **that we may present every man perfect** in Christ Jesus:

What does Paul mean when he says “present every man perfect?” Here, the word “perfect” means, “spiritually complete” and this is a reference to their practical or functional sanctification. See that “warning every man” in verse 28? That’s a reference to the JSOC. See “teaching every man in all wisdom,” that is a reference, not to their position in Christ, but to the instruction that allows their practical sanctification to match with their positional sanctification.

But, in Ephesians 1:4, Paul is talking about a positional truth that says, every member of the body of Christ has been made to be holy and without blame in their standing before God. They are perfect and complete in Christ. They are righteous and holy before God. They cannot be condemned because there is nothing to condemn them for in their positional standing before God because they are “in Christ.”

This is what it means to be holy and without blame before God. So, how can we be that? Only in Christ!

Spiritually, in our position before God, we are holy and without blame right now. And because God has done this as a part of our new identity in Christ, we then

have the power for this to be produced in us as a present reality in our everyday lives.

So which one did God ordain before the foundation of the world? God actually ordained that we would be a new creature in Christ.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which **God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**

When did God “before ordain?” Before the foundation of the world. And He would not say we “should” do something unless 1) it was possible to do it, and 2) it is the thing we ought to do.

Ephesians 1:3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly *places* in Christ:
⁴According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that **we should be holy and without blame before him in love:**

There is that “should” again. The first half of vs. 4 is about our standing before God in Christ – in which we are holy and without blame before Him right now. The second half of vs. 4 is about our walk, in accordance with who we have been made to be.

Why did He ordain that we “should” walk in good works, and not “would?” Because that is an issue of free will and God cannot violate that and keep us in His image. But there is another aspect to this sitting in the verse and it is in the last two words of the verse, “in love.”

So, why would Paul add those two words, because the phrase makes perfect sense if you cut it off at “...before him.” What does it mean that we “should be holy and without blame before Him in love?”

There are four ways that I am aware of that describe how this can be taken. I do have a preference, but let’s leave that for later.

The first way to view the phrase, “in love” is to see it as God’s love for us. What God is doing by making us to be holy and without blame is evidence of His great love for us.

The second way to take “in love” is to see it as our love for God. Love would be our natural response to Him who put us in Christ and blessed us with all spiritual blessings.

The third way to view “in love” is to see it as describing the means by which we are walking pleasing to God, and that means would be grace. Our love for God is the reason behind our practical sanctification. This view has “in love” as being a synonym for grace. We are not trying to be holy and without blame before Him in the Law, which is duty. We do it out of love, which is grace.

The fourth way to understand the phrase, “in love” is to see it as another way of saying, We are “in the Beloved.” In this case, the “in love” is describing the Father’s love for His son, which is the motivation for making us holy and without blame.

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath **made us accepted in the beloved.**

The “beloved” is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ. The Father loves His Son more than anything. Since we are in Christ, we are in Him whom God loves, Him who is perfect, holy and blameless, we also are perfect, holy and blameless, *in love* – referring to the love the Father has for His Son. That is to say, we are holy and without blame in the love the Father has for Christ.

We are God’s workmanship in the sense that He has already made us to be holy and without blame before Him. He did that by putting us in Christ in response to our faith in Christ as Savior. That makes us God’s workmanship. That is how He fashioned us; that is who He made us to be.

As God’s workmanship, we were created in Christ Jesus unto good works. In other words, that is the aim; that is the goal. And notice the end of vs. 10.

Ephesians 2:10 For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which **God hath before ordained that we should walk in them.**

Let's take a moment and talk about the aspect of us being, in our daily walk with God, holy and without blame. First, this phrase "to be holy and without blame" is referring to a three-part process whereby we are being perfected in practical holiness. Or to say it another way, Paul is describing the process of our sanctification! In order for us to be holy and without blame in the heavenly places, other parts of the process had to take place beforehand.

Part One: When we were JUEL, God declared us righteous by imputing the perfect righteousness of His Son to us, making us positionally righteous in our standing (identity) before Him. That saved us from *the penalty of sin*. This is the part that took place at the moment of salvation. We were given a sanctified standing before God which is holy and without blame, which a result of the imputed righteousness we received in our justification. (Things happen in an order, not just all at once, even though it is all part of a single process, like building a house – it is all one process but things happen in order. We trust Christ – God justifies us, then sanctifies us, in Christ.); that (our blameless standing) must have happened first, if we have any hope of making it a reality in our lives. This is the part which needed to be done in order for us to be given a holy position before God, like Ephesians 1:4 is describing. One more thing, it is because of what God has done in our standing before Him that we can be "heirs of God."

Part Two: Each day, as we allow the life of Christ to be lived in and through us, we are being "set apart" (holy!) from *the power of sin*! This is the part of our sanctification that is presently at work, every day. This is what we call "practical sanctification." This is when the life of Christ is made manifest in these mortal bodies. This happens as we live out of the doctrine. This is where the "we should walk in good works" comes in. For those who are involved in their practical sanctification, they will be "joint-heirs with Christ."

Part Three: Eventually, when we go to be with the Lord in death or the Blessed Hope, we will be “set apart” from the presence of sin! That will make all the difference for us in what kind of life we will have in eternity. This is the part of our sanctification which will complete the process of our sanctification that delivers us from every aspect of sin. At that time, being holy and without blame will be a practical reality for every saint. So, in the end, this is going to be true for everyone who is in Christ. But “the reward of the inheritance” will not be the same.

“Being holy and without blame before Him in love” is a spiritual blessing that sets us completely free from every aspect of sin so that we can live unto God without having to deal with the sin issue! How wonderful is that!

Let’s take a look at 1 Corinthians to see the issue of being holy and without blame. We know the Corinthians had gotten themselves off track and this epistle is one of reproof. But even though this is corrective doctrine, Paul does not start out correcting them.

Instead, he lays a foundation for the correction by talking about all the things that have been done for them and given to them in Jesus Christ. And then, after he reviews all these spiritual blessings, in vs. 10, he starts his rebuke of them.

Paul likes long sentences and his first one runs for four verses. Let’s look at what all Paul says to them.

1 Corinthians 1:1 Paul, called *to be* an apostle of Jesus Christ through the will of God, and Sosthenes *our* brother,

In vs. 2 he says they are sanctified in Christ Jesus and they are called to be saints

1 Corinthians 1:2 Unto the church of God which is at Corinth, to them that are **sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints**, with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours:

You might wonder, how is “called to be saints” something God has done for them? It looks more like something he wants them to do for Him. But, the fact

there is a calling means something has been done for them, AND there is a HOPE connected to that calling! And that is something God has done for them, not the other way round.

In vs. 4 he says grace has been given them by Jesus Christ

1 Corinthians 1:4 I thank my God always on your behalf, for **the grace of God which is given you by Jesus Christ;**

If you are wondering what that “grace” is referring to, I refer you to our study on 1 Corinthians.

In vs. 5 he says they are enriched by Christ in all utterance and knowledge

1 Corinthians 1:5 That in every thing ye are enriched by him, in all utterance, and *in* all knowledge;

In vs. 6 he says the testimony of Christ was confirmed in them

1 Corinthians 1:6 Even as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you:

In vs. 7 he says they have come behind in no gift

1 Corinthians 1:7 So that ye come behind in no gift; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ:

In vs. 8 he says they will be confirmed unto the end

1 Corinthians 1:8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end...

Now, I know we have not taken the time to talk about what all these things are about; what is the testimony of Christ that was confirmed in them?, what does Paul mean they will be confirmed unto the end? (the end of what?), etc. But we will do that work in our study on 1 Corinthians on Tuesdays in Glen Rose. The point in bringing them up is to say, Paul enumerates all these things so that he can tell them why God has done all this for them. And why has God done this?

1 Corinthians 1:8 Who shall also confirm you unto the end, ***that ye may be blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

Same thing as in Ephesians! The Corinthians and the Ephesians were miles apart in their thinking, in their conduct and in their labor with God, but they are not miles apart “before God.” Their standing in Christ is identical to each other.

Also, God’s intention for them is not different, it is identical.

Philippians 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.¹³ For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.¹⁴ Do all things without murmurings and disputings:¹⁵ **That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke**, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

That has to do with the here and now, not just when they get to heaven. They shine as lights “in the world.” They are living “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” That is their present tense.

1 Thessalonians 5:23 And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and / ***pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.***

If they are going to be preserved blameless unto the coming of the Lord, then that means they will be blameless in this life, here on the earth. And that is what we are working toward in our sonship lives. It really doesn’t matter what you call it, sonship, the crucified life, spiritual renewal, or any other label. What matters is that we, by the effectual working of the doctrine, enable the life of Christ to be lived in us to transform us, and through us to the affecting of others, and to the accomplishing of our godly labor.

We will come back to this when we get into chapter 3, but for now, we need to get these things working in our mind so we are aware of this particular spiritual

blessing to where we get comfortable with it. What I mean by “comfortable” is that we start to include it in our vocabulary and when we think of the term, we begin to have a picture of what this is about.

That means we will be spending time talking to God about our understanding of this spiritual blessing all this week. Maybe you could make it your “mercy of the week” so to speak.

What we have covered today is just the basic part, the foundational part of our understanding of this issue of being holy and without blame. Paul is going to continue to bring it up throughout his epistles and expand our knowledge of it.

The Book of Ephesians
Ephesians 1:5-10
Session Six: Our Spiritual Blessings

The Spiritual Blessing of Adoption

Ephesians 1:5 **Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children** by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will,

This is saying that God adopts His children. We are not made children by adoption, but it is the other way around. How are we made children?

Galatians 3:26 For ye are all the children of God **by faith in Christ Jesus.**

We understand that, right. The way you become a child of God is by putting your faith in Jesus Christ as your all-sufficient Savior. And then, Ephesians comes along and says that God predestinated us, who are His children, unto the adoption.

It is the adoption of what? The adoption of children. God is adopting who? He is adopting children. Whose children? His children. I think we have had it wrong because we have read our western view of adoption into the text.

In our day, we adopt those who are not our natural children, and we never adopt our own children, and that makes sense considering what adoption is for us. But in response to our faith in Christ, God puts us into His family, making us “children of God” according to Galatians 3. And then, we find out that before the foundation of the world, as a part of the mystery, God predestinated that He would adopt His children. And that fits perfectly with what went on in Hebrew, Greek and Roman households.

It is true that there is an adoption for Israel, but that was decided since the world began. Our adoption was predestinated before the world began.

Check out these references to things that were before the world began and look at what they have in common. Outside of Paul’s epistles, the Bible only mentions

three things that were “before the world” and they all have to do with Jesus Christ Himself.

John writes that Jesus shared the glory of His Father before the world was.

John 17:5 And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.

John also writes that the Father loved Jesus before the foundation of the world.

John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.

Peter says that the death of Jesus was foreordained before the foundation of the world.

1 Peter 1:19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: ²⁰ Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

But every other time that phrase is mentioned, it is always about the body of Christ and Paul’s commission to preach the mystery. Know this: the things of the mystery were ordained before the world.

1 Corinthians 2:7 But we speak the wisdom of God in a **mystery, even the hidden wisdom**, which **God ordained before the world** unto our glory:

Ephesians 1:4 According as he hath chosen us in him **before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love:

2 Timothy 1:9 Who hath saved us, and called *us* with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was **given us in Christ Jesus before the world began**, ¹⁰ but is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel:

¹¹ Whereunto I am appointed a preacher, and an apostle, and a teacher of the Gentiles.

Titus 1:2 In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised **before the world began;** ³ But hath in due times manifested his word through preaching, which is committed unto me according to the commandment of God our Saviour;

And what was Paul preaching? The mystery of Christ!

The things of Israel were spoken “since the world began.”

Luke 1:70 As he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets, which have been **since the world began:**

John 9:32 **Since the world began** was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind.

Acts 3:21 Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets **since the world began.**

The last mention of the phrase is in Romans where Paul uses it to say that no one knew about the mystery since the world began because God kept it a secret; kept it hidden in Himself.

Romans 16:25 Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was **kept secret since the world began,**

It makes sense doesn’t it, that if God decided on the mystery of Christ before the foundation of the world, and He wanted to keep it a secret until He revealed it to Paul, then the mystery had to be a secret “since the world began.”

The reason I mention this is to make the point that sometimes we get to thinking that the body of Christ was an after-thought, or a kind of “Plan B.” But Paul says,

God decided all of what He would do with the church, the body of Christ, before He created anything, before “in the beginning.”

Before we survey this next spiritual blessing, let me make a couple of points about foreknowledge, predestination and election.

Foreknowledge: God knows all things which are real and possible. Just because God knows what can possibly happen does not mean He has ordained it to take place. (See 1 Samuel 23:11-13)

Predestination: God’s determination that something will take place, and therefore it must. For example, every member of the body of Christ will be given “the adoption of children by Jesus Christ.”

The scripture does not teach that God is predestinating anyone to be saved. Predestination has to do with what God has determined to do for/with the saved. Therefore, predestination is primarily a sanctification/exaltation issue.

Election: A deliberate choice between alternatives. What God chose before the foundation of the world is that there would be a body of Christ. That is the “vehicle” so to speak.¹ It was the body of Christ that was chosen, not each individual in that body. Christ is the “elect” (Isaiah 42:1), Israel is the “elect” in Him (Isaiah 45:4), and the body of Christ is “elect” in Him (1 Corinthians 12:12,27; Colossians 3:12). It is always “in Christ.” We are elect because we are in Christ, who is the Elect. God does not elect anyone outside of His Son.

This spiritual blessing is that everyone who puts their trust in Christ as their all-sufficient Savior will be adopted. Predestination is not God’s choice of who He will save, but it is God’s set of plans concerning what He will do for all who are in Christ.

Adoption supposes a number of elements, not all of which are understood by believers today. Yes, adoption would mean that you are part of the family of God. That is pretty good, in and of itself. In Paul’s day, Roman families actually

¹ See Reservoir of Knowledge #1: The Two Buses for a fuller discussion of predestination and election.

adopted their own children. To neglect adopting one's own children was tantamount to disinheriting them.

In connection with our justification, our adoption assures us that we are part of the family of God. It also implies our relationship with each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. Again, these elements of our adoption are in connection with our justification.

Adoption goes beyond justification to having a part in our sanctification. In order to understand what Paul is saying, we need to understand something about adoption in Jewish society.

In Jewish society, the adoption was for placing a son or daughter as a legal part of the family business. It was an invitation for the father to train a son or daughter to labor with him in the family business. So, what is Paul saying? Back in Romans 8, Paul referred to us being given the Spirit of adoption in connection with our sanctification; an offer to be educated in our Father's business.

Here in Ephesians, both elements are present with regard to adoption. Every member of the body of Christ is made a part of God's family, and is offered the opportunity to be a part of the Father's business. But no matter how a son or daughter responds to the offer to work with their heavenly Father, every member of the body of Christ is adopted, without exception.

Acceptance

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us **accepted in the beloved.**⁷ In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

It is by God's grace that He has made us accepted in the beloved. Before we address the "accepted" part of the verse, let us identify the phrase "in the beloved." The "beloved" is a reference to the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is a title which God Himself gave to His Son.

Matthew 3:17 And lo a voice from heaven, saying, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

We are made accepted in the Beloved. God could have used any number of descriptors in Ephesians 1:6. He could have said we are accepted in the Righteous One or the Holy One. He could have referred to the blood of Christ or His meritorious work to speak of our acceptance. Although all of these are true of the Lord Jesus, by not using these descriptors, God is pointing us to something else when He uses the term Beloved. This term, “beloved” hearkens us back to eternity past and tells us we are accepted in the person of the Son before He became a man. I am not saying the Cross wasn’t necessary, it was. I am saying that the Son was beloved to the Father before His incarnation.

John 17:24 Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: **for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.**

How long before the foundation of the world? From eternity past. That is how long the Son has been Beloved.

And we are accepted in Him!

Many believers today are unaware they are accepted in the Son. They think they are accepted on the basis of their prayers, their good works, their faith or their merits. But here is the truth believers are accepted according to the measure of the Father’s everlasting love for His Son! How much do you think the Father loves the Son? The answer to that will tell you something about how accepted you are!

Another thing to notice is that we are not said to be acceptable, it says we are accepted. Acceptable is something we are working toward in our sanctification, but in the meantime, we are accepted in Christ. Think about the greatness of this and let it fill your soul.

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.

It is God's grace that allows us to be in Christ and being in Christ makes us acceptable to God. Stop and think about where we would be without grace, without being in Christ. Even if we desired to be righteous, we would have run after self-righteousness which would have produced pride and willfulness.

This acceptance is ours solely by the work of God. "He hath made us accepted in the Beloved;" that is the Father's work. It was the Father who thought of and designed this mercy, and then carried out every necessary thing to bring it to reality.

So, what does it mean to be "accepted?" Firstly, it means that our persons are accepted; we ourselves are pleasing to God. He now looks upon us with pleasure. Secondly, acceptance means we have access to Him. We may come to God whenever we choose and He will meet with us, no exceptions.

No matter what things may befall us, we are accepted in the beloved. It is always so. We are accepted in the beloved when we are happy or sad, when we are hurt or well, in every circumstance of life, this fact, this mercy, never changes.

It was in his kindness toward us that God decided to form the body of Christ to live in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. This is part of the exceeding riches of His grace!

Ephesians 2:7 That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in *his* kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

To extol the greatness of this blessing just think about this: God, before the foundation of the world, freely determined within Himself to provide salvation for the whole world and determined to form the church for the manifestation of His grace to all the world; and He does this for the sake of His beloved Son.

Being accepted in the beloved is more than just a feeling that God has for us or about us. The Father's acceptance of us in His Son gives rise to something God does for us; He justifies us unto eternal life. Our being made accepted in the beloved includes our justification.

And this provides the perfect segue into the next spiritual blessing; Redemption.

Redemption

Before we read the verses, take note that vs. 6 ends with a period. This long sentence from vs. 3 to vs. 6 has been about what the Father has done, with this last blessing being that He has made us accepted in the beloved. Now, look how vs. 7 starts out assuming you know that the Son is the beloved of vs. 6.

Ephesians 1:6 To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.⁷ **In whom we have redemption through his blood**, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;

Did you also catch the progression from being made accepted in the beloved to the Son providing redemption and forgiveness of sins? That is why I said that our acceptance includes justification.

Before we hone in on the blessing of redemption, I want to use this particular blessing to pick back up the acceptance issue. We have often heard preachers urging people to “accept Christ.” While that terminology is not technically correct, I understand what they are saying. But taking the words at face value, the issue is not whether we accept Christ’s work, but does God accept Christ’s work? The fact is, God did accept the work of Christ on the Cross and on that basis we can be saved by grace through faith.

When we trust Christ as Savior, we are placed in Christ and we get everything in Him. We are accepted in the beloved and we are JUEL.

In verse 7, Paul highlights two words; redemption and forgiveness. Redemption means “to set free through the payment of a ransom.” Sin held the entire human race hostage because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Through the redemption, we are made free from the bondage of sin and its consequences.

Forgiveness is the second word in the text. Forgiveness means, “a letting go, or sending away.”

Our redemption is found in the blood of Christ. That made the price of redemption very high. I know you already know about this. In fact, we are so familiar with the story of redemption that, if we are not careful, we will take it for granted and miss the glory of it.

Ephesians 1:7 In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, **according to the riches of his grace;**

Redemption and forgiveness in this DoGG are offered according to the riches of His grace.

Okay, so we know about these spiritual blessings. What, then, should we be doing in connection with them? We should firstly commit them to our memory. Once we do that we can think on them throughout the day.

Here is the list up to verse 7:

Spiritual Blessings:

- We are blameless
- We are adopted
- We are accepted
- We are redeemed
- We are forgiven

For me, things are easier with an acronym, which in this case is BAARF. Because the acronym is kind of funny, it makes it easier to remember.

The next thing is to do is spend some time in prayer talking to God about each one of these spiritual blessings. As an outline of what you might say, you could answer/discuss the following:

- Explain what each blessing is (For example, what does it mean to be blameless before God? It means: In our standing before God we are perfect and holy.)

- Explain what each blessing does for you and why that is important (For example, preserving us blameless unto the end ensures that our standing before God never changes, no matter what happens in our daily conduct. Why is that important? Being blameless also ensures that we participate in the Blessed Hope, and that we will be taken up to the heavenly places. Why is that important? And finally, it makes our practical sanctification possible. That is important because without first making us holy and without blame in our standing before God, we could never achieve it in our practical sanctification; we could never truly be transformed into the image of Christ. Therefore, it is one of the keys to our spiritual life.)
- Thank God for each spiritual blessing (SB). As I suggested in the accelerated education (AE) study on Prayer, take one spiritual blessing each week and concentrate on it. Why? Because the more time you spend on each SB, talking to God about the various aspects of it, and taking time to meditate on it, the more familiar you will become with it, and when you are, you will begin to learn other things about it. Spending this kind of time with each SB is how these things work in us to transform us.
- Pray about it before you get out of bed in the morning when you wake up (Define it.) Pray about it while you get dressed for the day (What it does for you.) Pray about it while you drive to work (Why that SB is important). Mention it when you pray before meals as just a thank you. Talk to your family members about which SB you are concentrating on that day and include it in your family prayer time. And finally, pray about it as the last thing you do at night before you go to sleep (Thank God for it.)
- In the beginning, go back and look at the notes, as there will be aspects of each SB that you might overlook if you operate from memory alone. We should be able to talk about the SB just as freely as we can talk about Jesus dying on the cross, buried in the tomb, and raised again on the third day.
- Think of other things you can do to keep these in your mind to grow your appreciation for what God has done for you, so you can begin to value and esteem (V&E) these the way your Father does, so that these are as

important to you as they are to Paul, so these SB do not fall out of your thinking but they cultivate an increasing love for God in your heart, and so you can be mindful of the things which ought to fill our hearts and minds. For example, I make little printed note cards and place them in various places around the house – taped to a mirror in the bathroom, or on a cabinet door or to a shelf in the pantry. How else can you put these in your remembrance?

It takes about a month to get a routine established. But once you do, you will have created a discipline in your life which will aid you in the process of the word effectually working in you.