

In Christ: Blessed

Who loves to receive gifts? When you receive one, do you ever just take it and set it on a shelf unopened, still covered in wrapping paper?

Imagine this gift comes from someone you know cares about you dearly, someone who you know when they give you a gift, it's just what you need, it's thoughtful, given in sincere love....

Let's say it has a card on top that says "This gift contains everything you need for life. It's all yours, just because I love you and want you to succeed in life" How many of you would destroy that wrapping paper? I'd be ripping it off like a kid!

Then when I got it open, I'd begin digging through it. Looking at each item. Maybe some I have heard of but never seen. Others I may be familiar with. There might even be something I know nothing about. I'd thank the friend, I'd use what I can and try to research and ask questions about the others. I would hope I wouldn't just let it all be wasted in a box on a shelf.

God has blessed us with everything we need to live a life that is more abundant in Christ.

Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

This verse actually kicks off what is the second longest sentence in the bible. It isn't completed until the end of verse 14, which is going to take the next 5 sermons to cover since I'm focusing on the "In Christ's".

When I read this verse, immediately my thoughts go to the spiritual blessing....what I can get from it..... But remember, this verse follows what we looked at last week, that in Christ you are a saint with grace and peace from God.

Paul starts back with "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ". When we hear that word blessed, we usually think of being blessed as in favored. But what favor does God need? Blessed here simply means praised.

Praised be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This is actually the most important part of the verse, not the spiritual blessing. We were created to praise God! When we understand who He is, we admire Him, we adore Him and we express these things to Him.....that's praise!

In the book of Revelation, John receives this revelation from Jesus, and he finds himself before the throne in heaven and as Jesus takes the scroll that no one could open, here is what John sees:

Revelation 5:13 (NKJV)

13 And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying:
“Blessing and honor and glory and power
Be to Him who sits on the throne,
And to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

There is none like Jesus and He is worthy to be praised..... just because He is God!

Psalm 145:3 (NIV)

3 Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise;
his greatness no one can fathom.

Even the understanding you have of how great He is, doesn't do His greatness justice. You can't even understand the depths of it all. It's beyond our limited understanding. No one can figure it out, we can't even fully appreciate the greatness of God. We can only declare it!

If I ask you what you want from God, you are likely to say blessing. But what your spirit desires is to praise Him. And praise should come before the blessing. That's the proper order, if you are in Christ. Your heart should be after the Blessor not the blessing. PRAISE FIRST! Then blessing WILL follow. It's what we see in Ephesians....

Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

Praise God, who has blessed us. How many of you are blessed? Who is responsible for your blessing?

God has blessed us. This isn't something new. Do you know that God has been in the blessing business for a long time? We see it all the way back at creation....He created man and then:

Genesis 1:28 (NKJV)

28 Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”

God's heart is to bless His people. It's not something that we have to work for, it's just something that He does. He's the Blessor.....seek Him, praise Him, and the blessings will follow.

2 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.

Are you thankful that God has given you all that you need for a godly life? That is a true blessing. I mean, yeah it's nice to have money, health, happiness, all the things we tend to mean when we say we want to be blessed. But everything you need for a godly life? That's what we NEED.....and you have it, It's all in Christ. That's where it's found.

In Christ we become children of God, and heirs with Christ.

Romans 8:16-17 (NKJV)

16 The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.

This is where the spiritual blessing is applied, if you are in Christ you are a joint heir. A heir has a right to an inheritance. If you are an heir what belongs to Jesus belongs to YOU!

Praise God, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ! Child of God.....you are rich!

Say "I am rich". If you have every spiritual blessing, that means there aren't spiritual blessings that you don't have! What more could you need? I know, some of you are thinking you could use a little more cash, or time, or fill in the blank. You may have lack in material things, worldly things that will someday perish, but you have no lack in spiritual blessing! I think Jesus deserves a "thank you"!

You, who **used to** identify as a sinner, **now** identifying as a saint, a joint heir with Christ, you have divine privileges and resources available to you right now!

Spiritual blessings are worked in us by the Holy Spirit, they belong to the one who is filled with and governed by the Holy Spirit.

Do you know what these spiritual blessings are? They are all over Ephesians, we'll actually be looking at them as they come up in following weeks.

Here are a few: chosen, adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, wisdom, an inheritance, sealed. These are spiritual blessings that have already been given to you if you are in Christ. If you aren't in Christ, you can receive these the instant you give your life to Jesus. And this certainly isn't an exhaustive list....there are more.

God has unsearchable riches. You can go looking and you will never find the end of the list. There is no end, if you are in an infinite God you have infinite spiritual blessing.

Who has ever tried counting the number of M&M's in a jar? You can look and look, count and count, but you can't actually see them all. So you make a guess, maybe even a calculated guess, but there's almost no way you can get it right unless you just guess, you can't count what you can't see.....You can only count them if you spread them out where you can see them all.

You can guess at the limits of God's spiritual blessing, but there is way more than you can see, you don't have access to them all to spread them out and count them one by one. I don't care what the old hymn says (count your many blessings, name them one by one!)

Ephesians 1:3 (NKJV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

Every spiritual blessing! The text does not say He WILL give us every spiritual blessing it says He HAS, it's already done. But it also says these spiritual blessings are in the heavenly places in Christ.

In the heavenlies is a more accurate translation and in the heavenlies means existing in heaven and of heavenly origin or nature. These spiritual blessings that are yours are in heaven and come from heaven.

Where are we physically located right now? On the earth. Where is Jesus located right now? In heaven.

We, believers, have this battle. Live in the world but focus on the things of heaven. Everything we do is for the world of the heavens. Moment by moment, decision by decision, you can be walking in one or the other (heaven or earth). You are physically on earth but where is your mind? What is your heart fixed on?

Colossians 3:2 (NKJV)

2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

What's your mind on this morning? Lunch? The Super Bowl? How much longer is this service? Why is that guy sleeping over there?

Or are you thinking about Jesus, blessings, souls, living right, prayer, how you can help someone?

Do you let the things of heaven invade your world? Or does your world keep the things of heaven out of your life? Get off facebook during church. Unless you are posting something about Jesus!

Get your head and heart out of the world and into the heavens. If you can't do it for a couple hours on Sunday, how can you do it the other 166 hours in the week.....

In the heavenlies is where you access your blessings. It's where they come from. But what else is in the heavenlies? Battles take place in the heavenlies.....

Ephesians 6:12 (NKJV)

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places.

In the heavenly places there are angels fighting off demons that are trying to keep you from your blessings. There is a spiritual battle and you are right in the midst of it. It's why you must be prepared and ready for battle.....because it's coming either way, ready or not.

Daniel 10:12-13 (NIV)

12 Then he continued, "Do not be afraid, Daniel. Since the first day that you set your mind to gain understanding and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard, and I have come in response to them.13 But the prince of the Persian kingdom resisted me twenty-one days. Then Michael, one of the chief princes, came to help me, because I was detained there with the king of Persia.

This is a real account of what happened, it's not some fairy tale. This angel came in response to Daniel's prayer but it took him a while because he was in battle.

You can only win a spiritual battle with spiritual weapons. Truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, Word of God, prayer.....

And it's not enough to just have them, you have to use them. Christians are to be on the attack against satan. Not sitting back and waiting or hiding. We are to be coming at him with our weapons because we are in Christ, joint heirs to the throne, and satan is already defeated!

We have all of these spiritual blessings, but sometimes you've got to fight for them. You have to be engaged in the heavenlies not just in your little world. Don't you think this life should be something more than what "things" we can obtain?

These spiritual blessings are rightfully yours in Christ. So don't let satan, this world, or anything else keep you from them.

In Joshua, God's people are trying to claim and possess a land which was already given to them. All they had to do was march in and claim it. At Jericho all they had to do was walk. And to claim God's best blessings all we must do is walk...in the Spirit...in the heavenlies...not the earthly.

IN CHRIST is the difference between the earthly and the heavenly.

Ephesians 5:15-17 (NIV)

15 Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, 16 making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. 17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is.

chosen, adopted, accepted, redeemed, forgiven, wisdom, an inheritance, sealed.

Ultimately these spiritual giftings are so we can carry out God’s plan and purpose for our lives. God’s plan is greater. God’s purpose is fulfilling. Being in Christ grants us the giftings, power, and ability to walk in this plan and purpose. Will you pursue it today?

Will you claim what is rightfully yours if you are in Christ? This is who you are....spiritually blessed!

Will you step forward and say, “Here I am, I submit to your way”. Will you battle in the heavenlies this morning and say “I need to know I’m chosen, accepted, forgiven, redeemed, adopted, with an inheritance, I’m sealed by the Holy Spirit, I need God’s wisdom”

Jesus is the way, the truth, the life. The only way to heaven. The only way to a truly “good” life. And the Holy Spirit is here today, waiting for you to let Him work....will you look to Jesus today?

This morning we choose to fix our minds on the heavenlies....where Jesus is, from where our blessings come, and where our future is. Let’s pray.