

A Study On Ephesians
“A Letter of Unity”
Facilitated by Pastor Larry D. Weaver

Some general information on the city of Ephesus: Ephesus was the capital of proconsular Asia; an opulent city on the West coast of Asia Minor, located on the banks of the Cayster and about forty miles SE of Smyrna. Its harbor was ample.

History: Ephesus was an ancient city when Paul arrived. Settlers of Asiatic origin inhabited the site. During the eleventh century B.C., Athenians arrived and gradually assimilated the older population. After varying periods of independence and absorption into neighboring empires, Ephesus came into the Roman Empire in 133 B.C. as part of the province of Asia. Though suffering terribly during the civil wars of the first century B.C., Ephesus enjoyed great prosperity under Rome during the first and second centuries A.D., when the city must have had a population of about a half million. Here the Roman governor resided, and here Paul conducted the longest of his city ministries (two years and nine months, based on **Acts 19:8,10**). The city's importance lay in its political prominence, **its economic clout derived from its position on major trade routes, and its religious leadership as a center for the worship of Diana, or Artemis**. By the middle of the third century signs of decay appeared in the city, and in 263 Goths raided Ephesus and dealt it a blow from which it never recovered. By the tenth century the prosperous city of Roman times was completely deserted and invaded by marshes.

Religion. The Ephesians worshiped the Asiatic goddess Artemis, or Diana whose temple, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, made the city famous. After the temple was destroyed by fire in 356 B.C., it was immediately rebuilt. It is said that some of the magnificent columns are incorporated into the Church of St. Sophia. There were many Jews in the city who were more or less influenced by Christianity based on **Acts 2:9; 6:9**. Timothy was the pastor of the church founded by Paul. To this church Paul addressed one of his epistles. According to Eusebius John spent his last years in Ephesus. John opposed the doctrines of Nestorius, and Paul opposed the idolatry of those who made or worshiped shrines or practiced magic in **Acts 19:13**. His opposition resulted in a serious riot.

Eph. 1:1 – 2 “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

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Eph. 1:1 – 2 NLT “This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God’s holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus. 2 May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.”

- In his salutation, Paul presents the dual source of his apostolic authority, a dual description of believers, a dual blessing for believers, and the dual source of those blessings.
- In the **a-portion** of verse it says, **“Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God...”** What this reveal is **Paul** wrote with the authority of an **apostle**. The Greek word **apostolos** means **“sent one”** and in the New Testament is used as an official title of the men God uniquely chose to be the foundation layers of the church and the receivers, teachers, and writers of His final revelation in the New Testament. The **apostolic** duties were to preach the gospel, teach and pray, work miracles, build up other leaders of the church, and write the Word of God.
- Besides the original twelve and Matthias, who replaced Judas, Paul was the only other **apostle**. Yet he was not inferior to the other apostles, having met all the requirements for that office. **Read 1 Cor. 9:1** Paul’s credentials were not his academic training or his rabbinical leadership but his being an **apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God**.
- In the **b-portion** of **verse 1** it says, **“to the saints who are at Ephesus, and who are faithful in Christ Jesus...”** What this reveals is **who Paul** wrote to with the authority of an **apostle**. It was to the saint at Ephesus and those who were faithful in Christ Jesus. From God’s side believers are those whom He has made holy, which is the meaning of **saints**. From man’s side believers are those who are **faithful**, those who have trusted **in Christ Jesus** as their Lord and Savior. Every Christian is a saint, because every Christian has been set apart and made holy through the perfect righteousness of Christ that has been placed to his account. When a person acts in faith to receive Christ, God acts in grace to give that person Christ’s own righteousness. It is Christ’s perfect righteousness—not a person’s own character or accomplishments, no matter how great they may seem in men’s eyes—that establishes *every* believer as one of God’s **saints** through saving faith.

Eph. 1:2 “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

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Eph. 1:2 NLT “May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.”

- The words “**Grace to you and peace**” were common words of greeting among Christians in the early church. **Grace** from **charis** is God’s great kindness toward those who are undeserving of His favor but who have placed their faith in His Son, Jesus Christ. To greet a Christian brother or sister in this way is much more than a wish for their general well-being. It is also an acknowledgment of the divine **grace** in which we stand and which has made us mutual members of Christ’s Body and of God’s divine family. **Grace** is the fountain of which **peace** from the word **eirēnē** is the stream. Because we have **grace** from God, we have **peace** with God and **the peace of God**, which **Phil. 4:7** says, “...**surpasses all understanding.**” Note here that **peace** is the equivalent of the Hebrew word **shālôm**, which, in its highest connotation, signifies spiritual prosperity and completeness.
- The **b-portion of verse 2** concludes revealing the dual source of blessings are “**from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.**” What they text reveal is the dual source of blessing is the same as the dual source of authority—**God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ**. They are not separate and distinct sources but two manifestations of the same Source, as indicated by the connective word **and**, which can indicate equivalence, and here indicates that the **Lord Jesus Christ** is deity just like **God our Father**. Note here that Paul’s message throughout this epistle is that believers might understand and experience more fully all of **the blessings** granted by our heavenly Father and His Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Eph. 1:3 “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...”

Eph. 1:3 NLT “All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.”

- In this one verse Paul presents six aspects of the divine blessing he is about to unfold: the blessed One, **God**; the Blessor, also **God**; the blessed ones, **believers**; the blessings, **all things spiritual**; the blessing location, **the heavenly places**; and the blessing Agent, **Jesus Christ**.

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- Paul introduces the verse by praising the One who has made the provision of blessing. He says, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Here it reveals **God the Father is the Blessed One!** The word **blessed** is from the Greek word **eulogeō** and is where we derive our English word **eulogy**. A **eulogy** is a **message of praise** and **commendation**, the **declaration of a person’s goodness**. Because no one is truly good but **God**, our supreme eulogy, our supreme praise, is for Him alone. Goodness is God’s nature. **God the Father** not only does good things, **He is good** in a way and to a degree that no human being except His own incarnate Son, **our Lord Jesus Christ**, can be. Therefore, nothing is more appropriate for God’s people than to **bless Him** for His great goodness. In all things—whether pain, struggle, trials, frustration, opposition, or adversity—we are to **praise God**, because **He is good** in the midst of it all. For that we praise and **bless Him**.
- The **b-portion** of **verse 3** says, **“... who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing...”** Consistent with His perfection and praiseworthiness, the One who is to be supremely blessed for His goodness is Himself **the supreme Blessor** who bestows goodness. It is He **“who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.”** **Jam. 1:17** teaches **“Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.”** Paul in **Rom. 8:28** assures us **“... that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”** God blesses because He is the source of all blessing, of every good thing. Goodness can only come from God because there is no source of goodness outside of God.
- In this same portion of **verse 3** it reveals **who the blessed** are as **us** (believers) whom God **has blessed**. With His wonderful grace, marvelous providence, and sovereign plan God has chosen to bless **us**. **Gal. 3:9** teaches **“those who are of faith are blessed.”** When we bless God we speak good of Him. When God **blesses us**, He communicates good to us. We bless Him with words; He **blesses us** with deeds. All we can do is to speak well of Him because in ourselves we have nothing good to give, and in Himself He lacks no goodness.

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- Again, in this same portion of the verse it reveals what our heavenly Father has **“blessed us with ... which is every spiritual blessing.”** In the New Testament **spiritual** from the word **pneumatikos** is always used in relation to the work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, it does not here refer to immaterial blessings as opposed to material ones, but to the divine origin of the blessings—whether they help us in our spirits, our minds, our bodies, our daily living, or however else. **Spiritual** refers to **the source, not the extent, of blessing.**
- Many Christians continually ask God for what He has already given us. They **pray for Him to give them more love**, although they should know as **Rom. 5:5** says, that **“the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit who was given to us.”** They **pray for peace**, although Jesus said in **John 14:27**, **“Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you.”** They **pray for happiness and joy**, although Jesus said in **John 15:11**, **“These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full.”** They **ask God for strength**, although His Word tells us in **Phil. 4:13** that we **“can do all things through Him who strengthens us.”** **Read 2 Pet. 1:3** It is not that God *will* give us but that **He has already given us “everything pertaining to life and godliness.”** He **has blessed us already with every spiritual blessing.** We are complete **“in Him.”** Our resources in God are not simply promised; they are possessed. God cannot give us more than He has already given us in His Son. There is nothing more to receive. The believer’s need, therefore, is not to receive something more but to do something more with what we have. Our heavenly position and possession are so certain and secure that Paul speaks of God in **Eph. 2:6** having already **“... raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus.”**
- The final clause of **verse 3** it reveals the location of blessings as **“heavenly places.”** These abundant, unlimited blessings from God are **“in the heavenly places.”** More than heaven itself is included. **“The heavenly places”** Paul speaks of here encompass the entire supernatural realm of God, His complete domain, the full extent of His divine operation. Note here that we as Christians have a paradoxical, two-level existence—a dual citizenship. While we remain on earth, we are citizens of earth. But in Christ our

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primary and infinitely more important citizenship is in heaven. **Read Phil. 3:20** Christ is our Lord and King, and we are citizens of His realm, **the heavenly places**. That is why we are to pursue as **Col. 3:1** “... **things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.**” Because we are members of God’s dominion, unlike the sons of this age, we are able to understand the supernatural things of God. When an American citizen travels to another country, he is every bit as much an American citizen as when he is in the United States. Whether he is in Africa, the Near East, Europe, Antarctica, or anywhere else outside his homeland, he is still completely an American citizen, with all the rights and privileges that such citizenship holds. Also we as Christians and citizens of God’s heavenly dominion, we hold all the rights and privileges that citizenship grants, even while we are living in the “foreign” and sometimes hostile land of earth. Our true life is in the supernatural, **the heavenly places**. We receive our heavenly blessings by living in the power of God’s Holy Spirit.

- Let me conclude the verse and point out a major point and that is Christians possess **“every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places”** because we are **“in Christ.”** What this text reveals is the One who is the blessing agent! His name is Jesus! Make no mistake here, when we put our trust in Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are placed in a marvelous union with Him. **1 Cor. 6:17** **“The one who joins himself to the Lord is one spirit with Him.”** Our unity as Christians is more than simply that of common agreement; it is the unity of a commonness of life, the common eternal life of God that beats through the soul of every believer. All that the Lord has, those of us **in Christ** have. **Read Rom. 8:16 - 17** As children of God Christ’s riches are our riches, His resources are our resources, His righteousness is our righteousness, and His power is our power. His position is our position: where He is, we are. His privilege is our privilege: what He is we are. His possession is our possession: what He has, we have. His practice is our practice: what He does, we do. We are those things and have those things and do those things by the grace of God, which never fails to work His will in those who trust Him.

Questions: Do you recognize God as the source of every spiritual blessing, or do you still look to the world for fulfillment?

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Eph. 1:4 “... just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love...”

Eph. 1:4 NLT “Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes.”

- **Eph. 1:4 - 5** reveal the past part of God’s eternal plan in forming the church, the Body of Jesus Christ. His plan is shown by the **method of election, He chose us; the object, us; the time, before the foundation of the world; the purpose, holiness; the motive, love; the result, sonship; and the goal, glory.**
- The Bible is clear that no person receives Jesus Christ as Savior who has not been **chosen by God**. The word **chose** from **eklegō** used here indicates God’s totally independent choice. **Read John 15:16; 2 Thess. 2:13** Make no mistake the salvation election of which Paul is speaking of here in our present text can be supported by **John’s** writing in **John 6:44. John 6:44 “No one can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him.”** The word **draws** *from helkuō* carries the idea of an **irresistible force** and was used in ancient Greek literature of a desperately hungry man being drawn to food. It can be similar to a picture of a giant electromagnet. In salvage yards they use giant electromagnets to lift and partially sort scrap metal. When the magnet is turned on, a tremendous magnetic force draws all the ferrous metals that are near to it, but it has no effect on other metals such as aluminum and brass. In a similar way, **God’s elective will** irresistibly draws to Himself those whom **He has chosen and predetermined to love and forgive**, while having no effect on those whom He has not.
- The **object of election is us**, not everyone, but only those whom **God chose**. Those whom God elects are those whom He has declared holy before the foundation of the world and who have identified with His Son Jesus Christ by faith. Being a Christian is having been **chosen by God to be His child** and to inherit all things through and with Jesus Christ.
- The text also give **the time** and speaks of it as, **before the foundation of the world**. **“Before the foundation of the world”** means, God’s plan of redemption existed **before sin even entered humanity**. What this also makes clear is, God’s **choosing of us** is

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apart from any merit or deserving that we have or done. All this takes place as a result by **God’s sovereign choosing**, those who are saved were placed in eternal union with Christ before creation even took place. God elected us **before the foundation of the world** means before the creation, the Fall, the covenants, or the law, we were sovereignly predestined by God to be His. He designed the church, the Body of His Son, before the world began.

- In the **b-portion** of **verse 4** it also reveals **the purpose God chose us** in order that we might be **holy and blameless**. God’s election is not just about salvation from judgment, but **transformation of character**. **Holiness** means, **set apart** for God and **blameless** means, **morally pure before Him without blemish, or spotless**. Because we are **chosen in Him** we are **holy and blameless before Him**. Because Jesus Christ gave Himself for us **1 Pet. 1:19** says, as **“a lamb unblemished and spotless”**, we have been given His own unblemished and spotless nature. The unworthy have been declared worthy, the unrighteous declared holy. It is Christ’s eternal and foreordained plan **Eph. 5:27** to **“present to Himself the church in all her glory, having no spot or wrinkle or any such thing; but that she should be holy and blameless.”** What Paul is talking about here is our position and not our practice. We know that in our living we are far from the holy standard and far from being blameless. Yet all that God is, we become in Jesus Christ. That is why salvation is secure. We have Christ’s perfect righteousness. Our practice can and does fall short, but our position can never fall short, because it is exactly the same **holy and blameless** position before God that Christ has. We are as secure as our Savior, because we are **in Him**, waiting for the full redemption and glorious holiness that awaits us in His presence.

Questions: Do you live with the awareness that your identity was established by God before you ever existed? / Would others describe your life as being “set apart” for God, and indistinguishable from the world?

Eph. 1:5 “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”

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Eph. 1:5 NLT “God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.”

- In **verse 5** it reveals God elects those who are saved because of His **love**. The final clause of **verse 4** and the **a-clause of verse 5** it says, **“In love He predestined us to adoption as sons.”** The word **predestined** means **to determine beforehand** and what that means is God determined in advance the destiny of believers: **to belong to His family. Read Romans 8:29 – 30** The text also says, **“He predestined us to adoption as sons.”** The word **adoption** In the Roman world was a powerful legal act where a child received: **full family rights; the father’s name; and legal inheritance.** Paul uses the cultural picture to show that believers become **full heirs of God through Christ.** When we become Christians we become children of God. **Read Rom. 8:15; Galatians 4:4 – 7** The result of God’s election is our **“adoption as sons through Jesus Christ.”** What that means is **adoption** is only possible **because of Christ’s work.** Salvation is planned by **the Father, accomplished by the Son, and applied by the Spirit.**
- What we see here is just as God chose Israel to be His special people only because of **His love**, He also **chose** the church, the family of the redeemed. Note here that biblical **love** which is **agapē love**, is not an emotion love, but a disposition of the heart to seek the welfare and meet the needs of others. Jesus said in **John 15:13 “Greater love has no one than this that one lay down his life for his friends.”** And that is exactly what Jesus Himself did on behalf of those **God has chosen to be saved.** In the ultimate divine act of **love**, God determined before the foundation of the earth that He would give His only Son to save us. **Eph. 2:4 - 5 “God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, 5 even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ.”** He loves us, and will eternally continue to love us, **according to the kind intention of His will.** These words continue to reinforce that it is God’s sovereign choice and decision to do what He chooses according to **His will.**

Questions: How does understanding God’s will as something that *pleased Him* reshape your view of His heart toward you?

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Eph. 1:6 “... to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”

Eph. 1:6 NLT “So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.”

- In **Eph. 1:6** it reveals why did God do all of that for us? Why did He want us to be His sons? We are saved and made sons **“to the praise of the glory of His grace.”** Above all else, **He elects and saves us for His own glory.** The three key words Praise, glory and grace stand out here in the text. **Praise** means, worship and honor directed toward God. **Glory** means, the visible greatness and majesty of God’s character. **Grace means,** God’s unearned favor toward sinners. Paul here is saying that when God saves people, **His grace becomes visible and worthy of praise. Rom. 11:36 “For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things.”** The salvation of believers becomes a **testimony to the greatness of God’s grace.**
- What we must understand here from this text is since God chose and preordained the Body before the foundation of the world this means no human being can boast or take glory for himself, but that all the **glory** belongs to God. Salvation is not partly of God and partly of man, but entirely of God. To guarantee that, every provision and every detail of salvation was accomplished before any human being was ever born or before a planet was formed on which he could be born. The ultimate reason for everything that exists is **“the glory of His grace.”** That is why, as God’s children, Christians should do everything they do—even such mundane things as eating and drinking—to the glory of God. **Read 1 Cor. 10:31**

Questions: Are you extending the same undeserved grace to others that God has freely given to you? / Who in your life is difficult to show grace to—and what does that reveal about your understanding of God’s grace toward you?

Eph. 1:7 – 8 “IN HIM we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, 8 which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight...”

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Eph. 1:7 – 8 NLT “He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8 He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding.”

- The **a-portion** of **verse 7** it says, **“IN HIM we have redemption through His blood...”** The word **redemption** from the Greek word **apolytrōsis** means, **to release by paying a ransom**. Note here that every human being born since the Fall has come into the world enslaved to sin, under total bondage to a nature that is corrupt, evil, and separated from its Creator. No person is spiritually free. No human being is free of sin or free of its consequences, the ultimate consequence, or penalty, for which is death. **Read Rom. 6:23**
- What the text reveals is **the price of redemption was His (Jesus) blood**. It cost the **blood** of the Son of God to buy men back from the slave market of sin. **Read Lev. 17:11; Heb. 9:22** The shedding of blood is a metonym for death, which is the penalty and the price of sin. Christ’s own death, by the shedding of **His blood**, was the substitute for our death. That which we deserved and could not save ourselves from, the beloved Savior, though He did not deserve it, took upon Himself. He made payment for what otherwise would have condemned us to death and hell.
- In the Old Testament and before Christ’s sacrifice the blood of sacrificial animals was continually offered on the altars of the Tabernacle and then the Temple daily. But **that blood was never able, and was never intended, to cleanse the offerer from sin**. Those animals were only symbolic, typical substitutes. As the writer of Hebrews explains **Heb. 10:4**, **“It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”** But in the shedding of **His blood Heb. 10:10** reveals, **“... we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.”** Eph. 5:2 says, He **“gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”** Jesus Himself said in **Matt. 26:28** that His blood was **“poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.”** Read **Heb. 9:12 – 14 / 1 Pet. 1:18 - 19** we **“... were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold...but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.”** Make no mistake here **redemption is in Christ Jesus and through His blood**. He has paid the price for all of us enslaved by sin, He bought us out of the slave market where we were in bondage, and set us free as liberated sons of God. In our

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freedom we are in union with Jesus Christ and receive every good thing that He is and has. **His death frees believers from sin’s guilt, condemnation, bondage, power, penalty, and—some glorious day—even from its presence.**

- In the **b-portion of verses 7 and verse 8** Paul begins to unpack the **results of redemption**. He says, “... **the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, 8 which He lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight ...**”

Redemption involves every conceivable good thing. Here Paul focuses on two important aspects. One is negative, the **forgiveness of our trespasses**, and the other is positive, **wisdom and insight**. He begins with **forgiveness** which is the primary result of **redemption** for the believer and one of the central salvation truths of both the Old and New Testaments. The word **forgiveness** from the Greek word **aphiēmi** basically means **to send away**. This word was used as a legal term and meant to repay or cancel a debt or to grant a pardon. Through the shedding of His own blood, Jesus Christ actually took the sins of the world upon His own head, as it were, and carried them an infinite distance away from where they could never return. In **Matt. 26:28** at the Last Supper, Jesus explained to the disciples that the cup He then shared with them was His “**blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for forgiveness of sins.**” That is the extent of **the forgiveness of our trespasses**. It is tragic that many Christians are depressed about their shortcomings and wrongdoing, thinking and acting as if God still holds their sins against them—forgetting that, because God has taken their sins upon Himself, they are separated from those sins **Ps. 103:12 says, as far as the east is from the west.**” To ancient Israel the distance from “**east to west**” and “the depths of the sea” represented **infinity**. God’s **forgiveness** is **infinite**; it takes away **our trespasses** to the farthest reaches of **eternal infinity**. Paul here says, **redemption** brings **forgiveness**.

- In the **c-portion of verse 7** the text reveals the vastness and comprehensiveness of our **forgiveness** and how it is seen in Paul’s statement that it is “**according to the riches of His grace.**” Note here that God’s grace is like His love, holiness, power, and all His other attributes, they are boundless. **It is far beyond our ability to comprehend or describe**, yet we know it is “**according to the riches of that infinite grace**” that He provides **forgiveness**. If you were to go to a multimillionaire and ask him to contribute to a worthy

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ministry, and he gave you a check for twenty-five dollars, he would only be giving *out of* his riches. Many poor people give that much. But if, instead, he gave you a check for a hundred thousand dollars, he would be giving *according to* his riches. That is a small picture of God’s generosity. His **forgiveness** not only is given “**according to the riches of His grace**”, but in the **a-portion of verse 8** it says, “... **which He lavished upon us.**” What this reveals is we need never worry that our sin will outdo God’s gracious forgiveness. Paul assures us in **Rom. 5:20**, “**Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.**” Our heavenly Father does not simply give us survival forgiveness that will barely cover our sins if we are careful and not to overdo. No we **cannot sin beyond God’s grace**, because as wicked and extensive as our sins might be or become, they will never approach **the greatness of His grace**. God did not give **grace** sparingly. The word means **to overflow, to give in abundance**. / The picture is of **grace overflowing beyond measure**. His **forgiveness** is **infinite**, and He lavishes it without measure upon those who trust in His Son. We therefore not only can enjoy future glory with God, but present fellowship with Him as well. Make no mistake here salvation is not based on the **depth of our sin**, but on the **riches of God’s grace**.

- In the final clause of **verse 8** it reveals the second important result of **redemption** and that is **wisdom** and **insight**. Note here that God’s plan of salvation was not accidental. It was **a carefully designed plan based on divine wisdom**. The cross was not a last-minute solution; it was **God’s eternal strategy for redemption**. Therefore the result of **redemption** for the believer is his being given **wisdom and insight**. The word **wisdom** comes from the Greek word **sophia** and emphasizes understanding of ultimate things, such as life and death, God and man, righteousness and sin, heaven and hell, eternity and time. Paul is speaking of **wisdom** concerning the things of God. The word **insight** comes from the word **phronēsis**, on the other hand, and emphasizes practical understanding, comprehension of the needs, problems, and principles of everyday living. It is spiritual prudence in the handling of daily affairs.
- What these two words explain about the text is, **God not only forgives us—taking away the sin that corrupts and distorts our lives**, but He also **gives us all the necessary equipment to understand Him and to walk through the world day by day**

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in a way that reflects His will and is pleasing to Him. He generously gives us the **wisdom and insight** which is the wherewithal both **to understand His Word and to know how to obey it**. When God takes away sin, He does not leave us in a spiritual, moral, and mental vacuum where we must then work things out for ourselves. No...He lavishes us with **wisdom and insight according to the riches of His grace** just as He lavishes forgiveness on us according to those riches.

Questions: Do you truly live as someone who has been *fully forgiven*, or do you still carry guilt? / How should understanding your redemption impact your daily walk with Christ?

Eph. 1:9 – 10 “He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed IN HIM 10 with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth. IN HIM...”

Eph. 1:9 – 10 NLT “God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. 10 And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.”

- Paul states in the **a-portion** of **verse 9** that, **“God has made known to us the mystery of His will.”** The word **mystery** comes from the Greek word **musterion** a derivative of **muo** and mean **to shut the mouth**; a secret or "mystery" through the idea of silence imposed by initiation rite. A mystery signifies something hidden, but it ceases to be a mystery as soon as it is revealed. It is not something mysterious in the sense that it is hard to understand, however it is something which has long been kept secret and has now been revealed, but it is still incomprehensible to the person who has not been introduced into its meaning. The mystery of God's purpose of redemption was hidden before in His counsels, but now is revealed. This **"mystery"** is not like the pagan mysteries, imparted only to the initiated few. All Christians have the access to His once unknown **mystery** it is not limited to a few. Having made known unto **us the mystery** which is largely referring to the Christian Gentiles who the Jews thought should never be

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received into the church of God, and to have all the privileges of the Jews, without being obliged to submit to circumcision, and perform the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law, which was a mystery, a hidden thing which had never been published before; and now is revealed to the apostles. It was God's will that it should be so and He kept hidden until the present time. The mystery revealed is **God's redemptive plan through Christ**. Part of this mystery includes: **Jews and Gentiles being united in Christ; Salvation through grace; Christ as the center of God's plan “according to His kind intention which He purposed IN HIM.”** Note here that God's plan flows from **His loving desire**, or **kind intent** and not human merit. The words **“purposed IN HIM”** speaks of God's entire plan is **centered in Christ**. Christ is, the **means of salvation**; the **focus of history**; and the **fulfillment of God's purpose. IN HIM!**

Eph. 1:10 “... with a view to an administration suitable to the fulness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth.”

Eph. 1:10 NLT “And this is the plan: At the right time He will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.”

- Why has God done so much for us? Why has He blessed us with every spiritual blessing, chosen us in Christ before the foundation of the world, made us holy and blameless, predestined us to adoption as His children, redeemed us through His blood, and lavishly given us forgiveness, wisdom, and insight according to the infinite riches of His grace? **Verse 10** gives us some insight into the **reason for redemption**.
- God redeems men in order that **He might gather everything to Himself**. The time of that gathering will be the millennial kingdom, which will be **“an administration suitable to the fulness of the times.”** When the completion of history comes, the kingdom arrives, eternity begins again, and the new heaven and new earth are established, there will be a **“... summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things upon the earth.”** Jesus Christ is the goal of history, which finds its resolution IN HIM. The paradise lost in Adam is restored **IN CHRIST**. At that time, **Phil. 2:10 - 11 says, “... at the name of Jesus every knee [will] bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under**

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the earth, and ... every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Christ will gather the entire universe into unity. At the present time the universe is anything but unified. It is corrupted, divided, and splintered. **John 12:31** teaches that Satan is now “**the ruler of this world,**” but in that day he “**shall be cast out.**” He and his demon angels will be thrown into the pit during the Millennium, released for a short while, and then cast into the lake of fire for all eternity. Apart from **the wisdom and insight God provides His children**, a hopeless conclusion is inescapable for the unbeliever. But history belongs to God, not to the weak plans of man or the perverse power of Satan. History is written and directed by its Creator, who will see it through to the fulfillment of His own ultimate purpose—**the summing up of all things IN CHRIST.** He designed His great plan in the ages past; He now sovereignly works it out according to His divine will; and in “**the fulness of the times**” He will complete and perfect it in His Son, in whom it will forever operate in righteous harmony and glorious newness along with all “**things in the heavens and things upon the earth.**”

Questions: If everything will ultimately be unified in Christ, how should that shape your priorities now? / Are you living as if Christ is truly the center of *all things*—including your life?

Transition: In **verse 1 thru 10** Paul has revealed **WHO we are IN CHRIST** and **WHAT we possess as a result of Christ.** He now teaches **WHAT** we will receive as a result of all we are in Christ in the future. He writes as a result and an aspect of the believer’s salvation we will receive a future inheritance. We who were elected, or predestined, before the world or time existed; we have been redeemed in this present age; and **we will receive our completed inheritance in the ages to come**, when we enter fully into the Father’s eternal heavenly kingdom. Here in **verses 11 – 14** of our text we are shown **the ground, the guarantee, and the goal of our incomparable inheritance in Jesus Christ.**

Eph. 1:11 – 12 “**IN HIM also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.**”

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Eph. 1:11 – 12 NLT “Furthermore, because we are UNITED WITH CHRIST, we have received an inheritance from God, for He chose us in advance, and He makes everything work out according to His plan. 12 God’s purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God.”

- The words **IN HIM** fits more appropriately at the beginning of verse 11 than at the end of verse 10. But in either place the phrase clearly refers to Jesus Christ, who is **the ground or source of our divine inheritance**. Apart from Jesus Christ, the only ultimate and eternal thing a person can receive from God is condemnation. God bestows sunshine, rain, and many other good things on all men, the righteous and unrighteous alike. But His spiritual blessings are bestowed only on those who are **IN HIM**. **Acts 4:12 says, “There is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men, by which we must be saved.”**
- In the **a-portion of verse 11** Paul begins and says, **“We have obtained an inheritance”** which is translated from the single compound Greek word **eklērothēmen**. When something in the future was so certain that it could not possibly fail to happen, the Greeks would often speak of it as if it had already occurred as is here, where Paul says, **“we HAVE obtained an inheritance.”** Our inheritance with Christ is yet another of the amazing and magnificent blessings with which the Father has blessed us in the Son. As Paul makes clear in **verse 3**, our inheritance includes **“every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ.”** In Jesus Christ, believers inherit every promise God has ever made. Peter tells us in **2 Pet. 1:3 – 4** that God’s **“... divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness”** and **“has granted to us His precious and magnificent promises.”** Paul says in **2 Cor. 1:20** with absolute inclusiveness, **“For as many as may be the promises of God, in Him they are yes.”** Make no mistake here our every conceivable need is met by God’s gracious provision in accordance with His divine promises. We are promised peace, love, grace, wisdom, eternal life, joy, victory, strength, guidance, power, mercy, forgiveness, righteousness, truth, fellowship with God, spiritual discernment, heaven, eternal riches, glory—those and every other good thing that comes from God. Paul says in **1 Cor. 3:22 - 23** **“The world or life or death or things present or things to come; all things belong to you,**

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and you belong to Christ, and Christ belongs to God.” Note here because we have been made joint heirs with Christ, we are guaranteed possession of everything He possesses. We are **“heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”** What this reveals is Jesus Christ is therefore **the ground of the inheritance that we have obtained.**

- Paul begins to support our receiving of our **inheritance** in the **b-portion of verse 11** from a divine perspective and says, **“...having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will...”** God’s perspective on our **inheritance in Christ** is here shown in **three ways, His predestination, His power, and His preeminence.** First, in **verse 11** the text reveals **God’s predestination** and says, **“...having been predestined according to His purpose.”** As Christians we are what we are because of what God chose to make us before any man was created. From eternity past He declared that every elect sinner—though vile, rebellious, useless, and undeserving of anything other than death; who placed their trust in His Son would be made as righteous as the One in whom they put their trust. As Paul has already established in **Eph. 1:4** when he says, **“He chose us IN HIM before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”** William Hendriksen’s comment on this passage and simply says, **“Neither fate nor human merit determines our destiny.”** The bottom line here is **we are unworthy, but He choose us** anyhow according to His divine choice.
- Also in the final clause of the **b-portion of verse 11** it reveals **God’s power.** It says, **“...who works all things after the counsel of His will.”** The word **works** is from the Greek word **energeō**, and is where we derive such English words as **energy, energetic, and energize.** What this portion of the text reveals it is God’s power **who works** creating and energizing **all things after the counsel of His will.** What this means is when God spoke each part of the world into existence it began immediately to operate precisely as He had planned it to do. Unlike the things we make, God’s creations do not have to be redesigned, prototyped, tested, fueled, charged, and the like. They are not only created ready to function, they are created functioning.
- What this verse reveals in summary is **“In Him”** everything is centered in Christ. Our identity, blessing, and future are tied to Him and as a result **“We have obtained an**

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inheritance.” What this points to is the spiritual blessings we now possess which is salvation, and redemption. But it also points to the eternal inheritance to come in the future which is eternal life, and all God’s promises. But then this verse reveals how God intentionally planned our salvation. It is not random, it is rooted in His divine purpose, because He **predestined it according to His purpose** and therefore **it works all things after the counsel of His will. What that reveals is because** God is sovereign, He is actively guiding all things, history, circumstances, and salvation—according to His perfect wisdom. The bottom line here is **God not only saved us on purpose; He is working everything on purpose for His glory and our eternal good.**

Question: Do you struggle with the idea of God being fully in control of all things? Why? / If your life is meant to bring glory to God, what needs to change in your priorities?

Eph. 1:12 “... to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”

Eph. 1:12 NLT “God’s purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God.”

- In **verse 12** we see the believer’s divine inheritance in Jesus Christ from our own human perspective. Throughout Scripture there is tension between God’s sovereignty and man’s will, a tension that, in his limited and imperfect knowledge, man is incapable of fully reconciling, as are so many other Scriptures and precepts in God’s Word. However, it is our responsibility to believe without reservation, just as His Word is revealed. We know the truths in God’s mind are in perfect accord, and that knowledge should satisfy us. Someone has pictured the divine and human sides of salvation in this way: When you look toward heaven you see a sign that reads, **“Whosoever will may come,”** and after you enter heaven you look back to that same sign and read on the other side, **“Chosen in Him before the foundation of the world.”** Whatever God’s reasons for designing such humanly irreconcilable truths, we should thank and praise Him for them. For the very reason that they are completely true while seeming to be contradictory, we are humbled in His presence as we stand in awe of that which to us is incomprehensible. To the trusting believer such truths are, but further evidence that Scripture is God’s doing, and not man’s.

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- The text says, “...to the end that we who were first to hope in Christ” is the first statement given here about the human side of our divine inheritance in Christ. The Greek has a definite article before **Christ**, and a more literal translation is **hope in the Christ**. The meaning is not changed, but the definite article emphasizes the uniqueness of our **hope**: it is in **the one and only Savior**, Jesus **Christ**. It also stresses the idea that the apostles and other first-generation Jewish believers were the first to receive the Messiah.
- A rich factor in man’s believing the gospel is the **hope** He is given in His Savior and Lord. Though Paul mentions **hope** before belief in this passage, the chronological as well as theological order is **faith and then hope**. In this context, however, **hope** is used primarily as a synonym **for faith**. The **first to hope in Christ** were **the first to believe in Him**.
- The concluding clause of **verse 12 says**, “...should be to the praise of His glory.” Note here that this phrase actually begins **verse 12** in the Greek text. That order actually fits logically with what Paul has been saying about God’s perspective on our inheritance. The Lord’s perspective and workings are seen in His **predestination**, in His **power**, and, what as we see here, is in His **preeminence**. **Man is redeemed for the purpose of restoring the divine image marred by sin**. We are saved to showcase God’s greatness. Because God’s intention in creating men was that they should bear **His divine image**, salvation’s goal is creation’s goal. God desires creatures that will give Him glory by both **proclaiming and displaying His glory**. Our salvation is not just about our benefits, but about God being honored through us. His seeking glory is a holy desire of which He is supremely and singly worthy. Our predestined salvation, including our attendant eternal and boundless blessings, are therefore designed that they **should be to the praise of His glory**. For that reason God redeems men. Also note that salvation is not the finish line—it’s the starting point of a life that points others to God’s glory.

Question: Are you living as someone chosen with purpose, or just going through the motions?

Eph. 1:13 – 14 “IN HIM, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed, you were sealed IN HIM with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

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Eph. 1:13 – 14 NLT “And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, He identified you as His own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom He promised long ago. 14 The Spirit is God’s guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised and that He has purchased us to be His own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.”

- Here Paul continues in **verses 13 – 14** and moves us from the **grounding or the source of inheritance**, to the **guarantee of our inheritance**. Paul says, **“IN HIM, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed...,”** As the apostle explains in his letter to the Romans, in **Rom. 10:17** when he says, **“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.”** Here Paul reinforces that and states that **faith** comes from a positive response **“to the message of truth, the gospel”** which is the good news that God has provided a way of salvation through the atoning work of His Son, Jesus Christ. Simply put salvation begins with hearing the message about Jesus. **John 1:12 says**, to **“... as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.”** Note here that man-made systems of religion, which rely on ritual or works or both, not only do not lead to God but can become great barriers to finding Him. The only way to come is through His Son. **Rom. 10:10 - 11 “For with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.’”**
- The words **“...having also believed...”** used in the text not only stresses the means by which salvation is appropriated but also the uniformity of such means by the use of **also**. **Faith** is man’s response to God’s elective purpose. God’s choice of men is **election**; men’s choice of God is **faith**. In **election** God gives **His promises**, and by **faith** men **receive them**. What this reveals is faith and trusting in Christ—is the response God requires.
- In the **b-portion of verse 13** it says, **“...you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise...”** Men have always wanted assurances, because the promises of other men are so often unreliable, we demand oaths, sworn affidavits, surety bonds, guarantees, warranties, and many other such means of trying to assure that what is

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promised is received. God’s simple WORD should be sufficient for us, but in His graciousness He makes His promises even more certain, if that were possible, by giving us His own **guarantees**. Here the Lord **guarantees His promises with His seal and with His pledge**. Note, because we have not yet received full possession of our inheritance, we may question its reality or at least its greatness. Therefore, as one means of guaranteeing His promises to those of us who have received Jesus Christ, God has **“sealed [us] in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.”** Every believer is given the very **Holy Spirit** of God the moment he trusts in Christ. Paul declares in the **a-portion of Rom. 8:9** **“You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you...”** Conversely, he goes on to say in the **b-portion of Rom. 8:9**, **“If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.”** Incredibly **1 Cor. 6:19** declares that the body of every true Christian is actually **“a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in [him].”** What this teaches is when a person becomes a Christian, **the Holy Spirit** takes up residence in their life and the life they now possess in Jesus Christ is different, because the Spirit of God is now within them. The Holy Spirit is now there to empower us, equip us for ministry, and function through the gifts He has given us. The Holy Spirit is our Helper and Advocate. He protects and encourages us. He also guarantees our inheritance in Jesus Christ. **Rom. 8:16 - 17** **“The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ.”** The Spirit of God is our securing force and our guarantee.

- The **sealing** of which Paul speaks of here refers to an official mark of **identification** that was placed on a letter, contract, or other important document. The seal usually was made from hot wax, which was placed on the document and then impressed with a signet ring. The document was thereby officially identified with and under the authority of the person to whom the signet belonged. That is the idea behind our being **sealed in Him [Christ] with the Holy Spirit of promise**. The Holy Spirit acts like a **seal of ownership and authenticity**, showing that: We belong to God; our salvation is secure and God will complete what He started. The bottom line is **when we hear the gospel and place our faith in Christ, God seals us with His Spirit as a permanent mark of**

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ownership and a guarantee of our future redemption. The seal of God’s Spirit in the believer signifies four primary things: **security, authenticity, ownership, and authority.** Make no mistake here, when we as Christians are **sealed with the Holy Spirit** we are delegated to proclaim, teach, minister, and defend God’s Word and His gospel with **His power, and authority.**

Questions: Do you live with confidence that you are sealed by the Holy Spirit? / In what ways do you sense the Holy Spirit at work in your life today?

Eph. 1:14 “...who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.”

Eph. 1:14 NLT “The Spirit is God’s guarantee that He will give us the inheritance He promised and that He has purchased us to be His own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.”

- In the **a-portion** of **verse 14** the text says, “... **who is given as a pledge of our inheritance...**” What this reveals is **the Holy Spirit** not only guarantees **our inheritance** in Jesus Christ with His seal, but also with His **pledge**. The word **pledge or guarantee** in the **NLT** from **arrabōn** originally referred to a down payment or earnest money given to secure a purchase. It was used to refer to the first or initial payment of money or assets, as a guarantee for the completion of a transaction or pledge. In the **NT** **arrabōn** is used only figuratively in referring to the Holy Spirit as the pledge or guarantee of the blessings promised by God, His ‘first installment, down payment, pledge, or guarantee. **Ephesians 1:14** teaches that the **Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee** that believers will fully receive everything He has promised, especially eternal life and complete redemption. What that means is the moment a person believes in Christ, God gives them the Holy Spirit as a “**down payment, first installment, or a deposit** that assures them their salvation is secure and not yet finished. This means what God started, He will complete. This is also found in the words **pledge** and **guarantee** meaning the Holy Spirit is proof that more is coming in all the blessings of salvation, including eternal life. Later it came to represent any sort of pledge. A form of the word even came to be used for engagement ring. As believers, we have **the Holy Spirit** as

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the divine **pledge of our inheritance**, God’s first installment of His guarantee that the fullness of the promised spiritual blessings identified in **Eph. 1:3** which speaks of “**in the heavenly places in Christ**” will one day be completely fulfilled. These spiritual blessings are assured and guaranteed with an absolute certainty that only God could provide. The Holy Spirit is the church’s irrevocable **pledge**, her divine engagement ring, as it were, that, as Christ’s bride, she will never be neglected or forsaken.

- In the **b-portion** of **verse 14** it **says**, “**with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.**” What we see here is, although our divine inheritance in Christ is a marvelous, awesome, and guaranteed promise to us from the Lord, it is not the primary purpose of our salvation. This portion of the verse moves us from the grounding or the source and the guarantee to the actual goal our inheritance.
- Make no mistake here, as believer’s our salvation and all of the promises, blessings, and privileges we gain through salvation are first of all bestowed “**...with a view to the redemption of God’s own possession, to the praise of His glory.**” The great, overriding goal and purpose of God’s **redemption** of men is the rescuing of what is His **own possession**. God also does all this so His greatness is displayed. All creation belongs to God, and in His infinite wisdom, love, and grace He chose to provide redemption for the fallen creatures He had made in His own image—for His own sake even more than for their sakes, because we do not belong to ourselves, no we belong to Him. As Paul has already twice declared in **Eph. 1:6, 12**, God’s ultimate goal in redeeming men is “**the praise of His glory.**” We are not saved and blessed for our own glory, but for God’s glory. **When** we glorify ourselves we rob God of that which is wholly His. He saved us to serve Him and **to praise** Him. We are saved to be restored to the intended divine purpose of creation, which is to bear the image of God and bring Him greater glory. Note that this is fully accomplished at the believer’s glorification, when we receive full glory and redemption and are made the perfect possession of God. We can sum this up by acknowledging the Holy Spirit in us is God’s personal guarantee that our future with Him is secure, our salvation will be completed, and His glory will be revealed.

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Questions: How should the reality of a guaranteed inheritance shape your perspective on facing trials and uncertainty? / Are you relying daily on the Spirit, or trying to live the Christian life in your own strength?

Transition: In **Eph. 1:3 - 14** Paul has set forth the amazing and unlimited blessings believers have in Jesus Christ, blessings that amount to our personal inheritance of all that belongs to Him. In the remainder of the chapter in **Eph. 1:15 - 23** Paul prays that the believers to whom he writes will come to fully understand and appreciate those blessings. In his prayer he focuses on believers' comprehension of their resources in their Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. In **Eph. 1:15–16** he begins by **praising them**, and then in **Eph. 1:17 – 23** he continues his prayer by praying to God for them.

Eph. 1:15 –16 “For this reason I too, having heard of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints, 16 do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers...”

Eph. 1:15 – 16 NLT “Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God’s people everywhere, 16 I have not stopped thanking God for you. I pray for you constantly....”

- In light of their marvelous inheritance in Jesus Christ Paul says, **“For this reason”**, he now intercedes for the possessors of that treasure. We can assume that this included not only the believers in Ephesus, but probably those in all the churches of Asia Minor. It had been about four years since Paul ministered there, and he was now in prison. But from letters, as well as through personal reports from friends who visited him in prison, he had received considerable information from and about the churches. The text says, **“...having HEARD of the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you, and your love for all the saints...”** Paul had **heard** two things that indicated the genuineness of the Ephesians salvation and for true Christians, they are two cardinal marks, **faith in the Lord Jesus** and **love for all the saints** (meaning other Christians). Here we hear Paul affectionately praising these saints in Ephesus! What we must learn from this is, the two dimensions **faith and love** in the spiritual life are inseparable. **Read 1 John 2:9 - 11**

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- In the **b-portion** of **verse 15** it first says, “... **the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you...**” The emphasis here first is on true saving belief, with the lordship of Jesus as the object of that belief. Some Christians, perhaps intending to protect the gospel from any taint of works righteousness, underplay Christ’s lordship almost to the point of denying it. Others would like to accept the term **Lord** only as a reference to deity, not sovereignty. But such a separation is artificial, because deity implies sovereignty. The One who alone is God rules alone. Make no mistake here Paul is not praising the Ephesians for some later, supplemental act of faith but for the original faith that brought them to saving submission to the sovereign Lord. He says, “...**the faith in the Lord Jesus which exists among you**” which refers to the same saving faith with which they entered the Christian life and in which they were continuing to live. What this reveals here is true faith is not hidden—it shows up in how we live. The Ephesian believers trust in Christ and had a reputation and a faith that others could see. The bottom line here is genuine faith produces a noticeable witness.
- In the **c-portion** of **verse 15** it says, “... **and your love for all the saints....**” In this part of the text it reveal a second mark of genuine salvation is **love for all the saints**, and because of such love Paul offers praise and thanks for the Ephesian believers. Note here **Christian love is indiscriminate**; it does not pick and choose which believers it will love. Christ loves all believers, and they are precious to Him. By definition, therefore, Christian love extends to all Christians. To the extent that it does not, it is less than Christian. Paul calls for believers in **Phil. 2:2** to be “**maintaining the same love**”, which is to love all believers the same. Sometimes we hear Christians say, “**I love him in the Lord,**” which seems to imply that they have no personal affection for, nor commitment to the needs of the individual. They extend a certain spiritualized kind of love only because the other person is a fellow believer. But that is not genuine love. To truly love a person in the Lord is to love a person as the Lord loves them which is to love them genuinely and sacrificially. **Read 1 John 3:14** That is the sort of love the Ephesian Christians had **for all the saints**. Sadly, however, their love did not last. They kept the faith pure and persevered in it. Yet in His letter to the seven churches of Asia Minor the Lord says of the church at Ephesus in **Rev. 2:2 - 4**, “**I have this against you, that you have left**

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your first love.” Sad to say, this church had lost the great love for Christ and their fellow believers for which only a few decades earlier Paul had so warmly praised them.

Understand here, that **faith and love** must be kept in balance. Many monks, hermits, and countless others throughout the history of the church have endeavored to keep their **faith pure**, but have not reached out to others **in love** as the Lord commands every believer to do. They often become heresy hunters, eager to tear down what is wrong, but doing little to build up what is good, full of criticism but deficient in love. True faith cannot exist apart from true love. We cannot love the Lord Jesus without loving those whom He loves. **1 John 5:1 “Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God; and whoever loves the Father loves the child born of Him.”** What Paul writes about the Ephesian believers is, their faith wasn’t just vertical (toward God), but horizontal (toward people). They loved **all** believers—not just the easy or familiar ones. Note here that real Christianity is demonstrated through love for others. Paul connects faith and love as inseparable evidence of spiritual life, therefore where faith is real, love will follow. You cannot claim strong faith and lack genuine love.

- In the closing clause of **verse 16** it reveals the Christians to whom Paul wrote his Ephesian letter had the right balance, and it was for their **great faith** and their **great love** that the apostle assured them saying, **“I ... do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers.”**

Questions: If someone were to describe your Christian life, would they mention your faith in Christ and your love for others? Is your faith in Jesus visible enough that others could ‘hear about it’ like Paul heard about the Ephesians? Do you show love to all believers, or only to those you naturally connect with?

Transition: In the remainder of the chapter 1 Paul prays for God to give believers true comprehension and appreciation of who they are in Jesus Christ, in order that they might begin to have some idea of how magnificent and unlimited are the blessings that already belonged to them in their Lord and Savior.

Eph. 1:17 “... that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.”

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Eph. 1:17 NLT “... asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God.”

- The first thing the text points out is this petition is directed to “... **the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory...**” which is a designation of God which links God the Father to Christ the Son in terms of essential nature. It speaks of the One to whom all **glory** belongs and is the same in essence as the **Lord Jesus Christ**. For the second time in three verses Christ is called **Lord**. (Here and in verse 15). In essence Paul prayed that the Ephesians would be spared from anxiously searching for what was already theirs, but rather would see that the great God who is their God is the source of all they need and has it ready for them if they are just open to receive it. Such a receptive attitude requires that God Himself “... **give to you a spirit of wisdom and of God’s deeper truths** cannot be seen with our eyes, heard with our ears, or comprehended by our reason or intuition. They are revealed only to those who love Him. / Every Christian has many specific needs—physical, moral, and spiritual—for which He must ask the Lord’s help. But no Christian needs, or can have, more of the Lord or of His blessing and inheritance than he already has. That is why Paul tells us, as he told the Ephesian believers, not to seek more spiritual resources but to understand and use those we were given in absolute completeness the moment we received Christ.
- Paul prays specifically that God **may give** the faculty of understanding so that we can know our resources, which he calls **a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him**. The **spirit of wisdom** is given through the Holy Spirit, but this **spirit** does not refer to the Holy Spirit Himself, as some interpreters suggest. The word **spirit** here is from **pneuma**, meaning that it has no article before it. In such cases the indefinite article is usually supplied in English, as in our text: **a spirit**. Believers already possess the Holy Spirit, for whom their bodies are temples. Nor does it seem that Paul was speaking of the human spirit, which every person already possesses. The basic meaning of **pneuma** (and is where we get such English words such as **pneumatic** and **pneumonia**) is breath or air, and from that meaning is derived the connotation of spirit. But like our English **spirit**, **pneuma** sometimes was **used of a disposition, influence, or attitude**—as in “He is in high spirits today.” Jesus used the word in that sense in the first beatitude

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in **Matt. 5:3** saying, **“Blessed are the poor in spirit.”** He was not referring to the Holy Spirit or to the human spirit but to **the spirit, or attitude, of humility.** Here in **verse 17** Paul prayed for God to give the Ephesians **a special disposition or spirit of wisdom,** meaning **the fullness of godly knowledge and understanding** of which the sanctified human mind is capable of receiving. “Let them know how much they possess in your Son,” he says, in effect. “Give them a keen, rich, deep, strong understanding of their inheritance in Christ.” He prays for the Holy Spirit to give their spirits the right **spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him.** The word **revelation,** though used here as a synonym of **wisdom,** deals with God’s imparting knowledge to us, whereas **wisdom** could emphasize our use of that knowledge. We must know and understand our position in the Lord before we are capable of serving Him. We must know what we have before we can satisfactorily use it. This additional **wisdom** goes beyond intellectual knowledge. It is far richer; and Paul desired that for the Ephesian Christians. In his praying for the Ephesian believers Paul asks God to give them **revelation and wisdom** in three particular areas of God’s magnificent, incomparable truth. He prays for them to come to a clearer understanding of the greatness of God’s plan, the greatness of His power, and the greatness of His Person.

Questions: Are you seeking God for wisdom in your own life? / In what areas of life do you need God’s wisdom to see things clearly?

Eph. 1:18 “I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints...,”

Eph. 1:18 NLT “I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance.”

- In **verse 18** Paul begins and ask God to give the Ephesians the greatness of His plan. He prays that God will open **“the eyes of their heart so they may be enlightened.”** In most modern cultures, the **heart** is thought of as the seat of emotions and feelings. But most ancients—Hebrews, Greeks, and many others—considered the **heart / kardia** to

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be the center of knowledge, understanding, thinking, and wisdom. The New Testament also uses it in that way. The heart was considered to be the seat of the mind and will, and it could be taught what the brain could never know. Paul therefore prays for the minds of the Ephesians to **“be enlightened.”** Emotions have a significant place in the Christian life, but they are reliable only as they are guided and controlled by God’s truth—which we come to know and understand through our minds. That is why when the Holy Spirit works in the believer’s mind, He enriches it to understand divine truth that is deep and profound, and then relates that truth to life—including those aspects of life that involve our emotions. The first thing for which Paul prays is that believers **be enlightened** about the greatness of God’s plan. In the most comprehensive of terms, the apostle asks that they be given understanding of **the hope of His calling** and **the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**. He prays for God to enlighten them about the magnificent truths of election, predestination, adoption, redemption, forgiveness, wisdom and insight, inheritance, and sealing and pledge of the Holy Spirit about which he has just been instructing them. Those truths summarize God’s master plan for the redemption of mankind, His eternal plan to bring men back to Himself through His own Son, thereby making them His children. Until we comprehend who we truly are in Jesus Christ, it is impossible to live an obedient and fulfilling life. Only when we know who we really are can we live like who we are. Only when we come to understand how our lives are anchored in eternity can we have the right perspective and motivation for living in time. Only when we come to understand our heavenly citizenship can we live obedient and productive lives as godly citizens on earth.

- It is God’s great plan that every believer one day **Rom. 8:29** says, **“...become conformed to the image of His Son.”** That is **the hope of His calling**—the eternal destiny and glory of the believer fulfilled in the coming kingdom. The fullness of that hope will be experienced when we receive the supreme **riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints**. It is truth too magnificent for words to describe, which is why even God’s own revelation requires the illumination of His Spirit in order for believers even to begin to understand the marvelous magnitude of the blessings of salvation that exist in the sphere of the saints. Our being glorious children of God and joint heirs with

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Jesus Christ of all God possesses is the consummation and end of salvation promised from eternity past and held in hope until the future manifestation of Christ. There is nothing more to seek, nothing more to be given or received. We have it all now, and we will have it throughout eternity.

Questions: Why does Paul emphasize *enlightenment of the heart* rather than just intellectual knowledge? / Are there areas in your life where you need your “eyes of the heart” enlightened?

Eph. 1:19 – 20 “...and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might 20 which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places...”

Eph. 1:19 – 20 NLT “I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God’s power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power 20 that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God’s right hand in the heavenly realms.”

- In **verse 19** we see Paul’s second request which is for the Lord to give the Ephesian believers understanding of His great “**power**” that will bring them to their inheritance in glory. In **verse 19** Paul uses four different Greek synonyms to emphasize the greatness of that power. First he speaks of **power** from the word **dunamis** and is where we derive our English word **dynamite** and **dynamo**. This **power** is only for Christians, for those **who believe**. Not only that, but it is all **the power** we are ever offered or could ever have. There could be no more, and it is foolish and presumptuous to ask for more. **The surpassing greatness of God’s power** is given to every believer, not just to those who believe and then have a mystical experience, second blessing, or some other supposed additional work of grace. **When we are saved we receive all of God’s grace and all of His power**, and that assures us of the realization of our eternal hope.
- Second, Paul uses the word **working** from **energeia** and is where we derive our words **energy**. This word speaks of the **energizing force of the Spirit** that empowers believers to live for the Lord. Then the third word is **strength** from **kratos**, which may also be

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translated “**dominion**” or “**power.**” Finally Paul uses the word **might**, from **ischus** which carries **the idea of endowed power or ability**. In all those ways the Holy Spirit empowers God’s children. Paul did not pray for power to be given to believers. How could they have more than what they had? He prayed first of all that they be given a divine awareness of the power they possessed in Christ.

- In **verse 20** it reveals the supernatural **power ... working ... strength and might** with which God supplies every believer and with **which He will glorify every believer is that which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places**. Here we hear Paul pray that we understand the power of God’s keeping, His securing us and His fulfilling the marvelous hope which is ours in Christ. The resurrection and ascension power—the divine energy that lifted Christ from the grave to the earth, and from the earth to heaven—is the power that will lift us to glory. At times all of us are tempted to doubt, to wonder if God can do a certain thing for us or through us or ultimately bring us into His presence. But when we look at **what He brought about in Christ**, at what He faithfully accomplished on behalf of His Son—and at His assurance that He will just as faithfully accomplish His work on our behalf through **the surpassing greatness of His power toward us**. With that in mind what grounds do we have for doubting God? In light of such assurance, how can we as Christians feel insecure, forsaken, or powerless? The same unlimited divine power that **raised Jesus from the dead** will raise us from the dead, and the same power that **seated Him at His right hand of God in the heavenly places** will seat us there with Him. In the meanwhile, that resurrection power is at our disposal for living to His glory. It is so certain that this power will bring us to glory that Paul spoke as if it has already occurred, because it has already occurred in God’s eternal plan.

Questions: Are you living with confidence in the resurrection power of Christ, or self-reliance? / How does this passage challenge your view of spiritual victory and authority?

Eph. 1:21 – 23 “... far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. 22 And He put

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all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, 23 which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.”

Eph. 1:21 – 23 NLT “Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. 22 God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. 23 And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.”

- Here in **verses 21 – 23** it moves us from Christ’s **might** to His **majesty**. Paul’s third request is for the Lord to give believers understanding of the greatness of His Person who secures and empowers them. What great blessing we can have when we take time to set our own concerns and needs aside and simply focus on the Lord of glory, allowing the Holy Spirit to do in us what Paul asked Him to do in the Ephesians. Here he ask God to give them deep understanding of the truth that our Lord is **far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come**. The terms **rule**, meaning leader or first one, **authority, power**, and **dominion** meaning lordship were traditional Jewish terms to designate angelic beings of great rank and might. The point here is that **the power of Christ** applied in the believer’s behalf cannot be overthrown or negated or defeated, because it far surpasses that of the armies of Satan who design to defeat it. Our Lord not only is above, but **far above**, everything and everyone else. He is above Satan and above Satan’s world system. He is above the holy angels and the fallen angels, above saved people and unsaved people, for time and for eternity. He is above all names, titles, ranks, levels, powers, and jurisdictions in the universe. In **verse 22** it reveals God **put all things in subjection under His feet**. There is no limit on time, as Paul said Christ will be supreme **not only in this age, but also in the one to come**—that is, in the eternal kingdom of the Lord Jesus Christ.
- In the **b-portion** of **verse 22 - 23** it reveals a critical point and that is, as far as believers are concerned, God **“gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all.”** What we see here is, Christ is not only

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the **head** of the church, but its **fulness**. Since He has such a unique and intimate relationship with the redeemed whom He loves, all His power will be used in their behalf to fulfill His loving purpose for them. He is completely over us and completely in us, our supreme Lord and His supreme power. The church is **the fulness** or the complement of Christ. As a head must have a body to manifest the glory of that head, so the Lord must have the church to manifest His glory. Jesus Christ is the only One for whom the word incomparable truly applies; yet in a thrilling and securing wonder, He has chosen us to display His incomparable majesty. We are guaranteed to come to glory in order that we might forever manifest His praise.

- **The church, which is His body, is made full and complete by Christ.** It is Jesus Christ who **fills all in all**, giving His fulness to believers. But in God’s wisdom and grace, believers, as **the church**, are also **the fulness of Him**. The point of this great petition is that we might comprehend how secure we are in Christ and how unwavering and immutable is our hope of eternal inheritance. The power of glorification is invincible and is presently working to bring us to glory.

Questions: Why is it important that Christ is above *all powers and authorities*, visible and invisible? / Do you live as someone under Christ’s headship, or do you sometimes act independently? / Are you embracing your role in the church as part of His body, or are you functioning more as an individual?