

**Eph 1:1–3 (ESV)** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: <sup>(2)</sup> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <sup>(3)</sup> Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

### 1. Review – we’ve seen the irreducible minimum of what a Christian is

- A. They are *saints* = Separated
  - 1). The call to God in salvation is always a call out of the world and sin
- B. They are *faithful* = They believe in the body of truth that is found in the Scriptures
  - 1). They are faithful to that body of truth – their lives give evidence
- C. They are *in Christ* = we spent three weeks looking at what that means

**Transition:** Now we move on into the text – into verse 2 – a very important verse

**Eph 1:2 (ESV)** Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

### 1. So easy to skip lightly past these introductory verses

“Grace and peace. Just a typical greeting of the day. A formality before the important stuff”

- A. But this is God’s word – every word important – Paul’s not writing just to adhere to etiquette
- B. Paul is expressing his desire that his readers experience the riches of God’s grace and peace

**Transition:** So we don’t want to skip over these words – they are packed with meaning

### 2. The order is important

- A. You must know grace if you ever want to experience the blessings of Ephesians
  - You must know grace if you’re going to experience peace – the link between the two is vital

**Point:** So Paul puts in grace before he writes peace and lists the blessings that follow in vs 4:1-14

## I. GRACE AND PEACE

### 1. Grace defined = Unmerited favor. Acronym = God’s riches at Christ’s expense

**Lloyd-Jones:** (Grace is) favor you do not deserve, favor you receive but to which you have no right or title in any shape or form, and of which you are entirely unworthy and undeserving.

- A. We can call it condescending love – divine love stooping down to the undeserving

### 2. Peace defined = two meanings. Peace **with** God and the Peace **of** God

#### Peace **WITH** God

- A. Must be careful not to define “Peace” only in negative = An absence of conflict. Cessation of hostilities
  - 1). It does mean that but it means so much more than that in the NT
- B. The negative = Peace is a cessation of hostilities
  - The positive = That cessation is based upon the reconciliation of two alienated parties

**Question:** Why did reconciliation have to take place so that there could be peace?

- A. Because of the state man was left in after the fall – we had become enemies of God

**Eph 2:1–3 (ESV)** And you were dead in the trespasses and sins <sup>(2)</sup> in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience— <sup>(3)</sup> among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind.

- 1). Man is born at odds with God – hostile towards him
  - They follow Satan and live to satisfy the flesh
- 2). Why? We were spiritually dead – therefore we have no desire for God
  - a). We strive against him and push him away – we suppress his truth
- B. But the good news of the Bible – God has done something about that
  - 1). In grace he has stooped down to rescue lost man

- 2). In love he reached out to those who hated him and deserved nothing but eternal punishment  
**Rom 5:8-10 (NIV)** But God *demonstrates his own love for us* in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (9) Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! (10) *For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life!*

- a). In grace God stooped down – and told the rebel they were loved  
 Then demonstrated that love by being nailed to a cross to make the sinner his own

C. God offered reconciliation to man – a way to end the war – a way to come together in love

- 1). That's the gospel message isn't it?  
 The alienation between a holy God and sinful man can end

**Point:** Therefore the first great result of grace is Peace WITH God

**Ro 5:1 (ESV)** Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, *we have peace with God* through our Lord Jesus Christ.

A. The judge has become our Father – We experience his love rather than his wrath

- 1). All because of what God has done in his grace

**Transition:** But the result of grace is not only peace with God, it gives the saved sinner the peace of God

### **The Peace OF God**

A. It enables a man for the first time in his life to have rest in mind and heart

- 1). We have peace as we think about eternity  
 a). The truth of grace gives us the way to answer an accusing conscience  
 1a). We know through the work of Christ we have been justified – declared not guilty  
 b). Therefore we can look beyond the grave with no fear – I will be met with grace  
 1 Pet 1:13 (NIV) ... set your hope *fully on the grace* to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed.  
 1a). As you think about standing before him – let grace give you peace

2). We have peace as we live in this chaotic world

- a). We know there is someone greater than ourselves lovingly taking care of things  
 1a). A madman in North Korea isn't in control of anything – Our Father is  
 2a). A renegade germ isn't going to take me out a moment before God has decided  
 3a). A gang member on Friday night in streets of Santa Ana has no power to pull a trigger  
 Unless that is the day and the way God has designed for me to go home

**Point:** Because grace has made us right with God – because we now have a heavenly Father

A. We live daily in the light of this truth - the creator of all things is watching over us

- 1). We are never out of his sight – that truth brings peace

B. AND it is a growing peace – because we experience a growing confidence in God and the promises

- 1). Why? We have an ever-increasing history of his faithfulness in our life  
 2). Our history behind us provides the reason to rest in the future in front of us

**Thought:** The potential of this peace is amazing

**Php 4:7 (ESV)** And the *peace of God, which surpasses all understanding*, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

A. It is a peace that is so deep it passes our ability to understand it - Why? Because it is God's peace

- 1). It is the peace of God given to us – a peace so serene – tranquil - we are amazed

**Jn 14:27 (ESV)** Peace I leave with you; *my peace I give to you*. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

- a). Do you think Jesus Christ is worried about anything – total tranquility

- b). When your in control of everything – when it all works out according to your purposes  
**Isa 14:27 (NASB)** "For the LORD of hosts has planned, and who can frustrate it? And as for His stretched-out hand, who can turn it back?"
- 1a). He is not worried about a thing! It all works out to bring Him glory
- 2a).
- 2). Jesus is saying – the potential – you can walk in the same peace I have
- B. This peace given to us is a gracious gift of God to enable us to have serenity in a world gone mad
- 1). It is given as a guard to help us not be anxious like the world
- 3. This is all a by-product of grace (why it is listed first)**
- A. Grace has drawn you into a loving relationship with Himself by grace  
**Eph 2:5 (ESV)** even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—  
**Eph 2:8 (ESV)** For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,
- 1). When you embraced Christ by faith – you were reconciled to God – the conflict ended
- a). You have *peace WITH God*
- 2). Now that you have peace with God you experience the Peace **OF** God
- a). Because he is alive in your life – you walk under his watchful care
- B. We deserve none of it – It is a free gift of God given to undeserving sinners
- 1). He draws us into a relationship with Him – He becomes our Father – we become His child
- Question:** I must ask then. Has God become your Father?
- A. Have you turned from your sin in repentance and turned to Him by faith  
Trusting in the work of his Son alone for your salvation?
- B. Important – this is not some abstract belief in some big guy in sky – I'm looking at you Country music!
- 1). This is a relationship with God as your Father
- a). This is what grace does – this is what God choosing you accomplishes  
You trust in Him – you change families – you're his child = RELATIONSHIP
- C. So let me ask you again – Is God your Father?
- 1). Not do you believe in God? Not do you have warm thoughts about God?  
Not do you go to church? – serve in church – give to the church  
Not do you care about truth – not do you get angry about some sin
- 2). Have you seen *your* sin? Have you fled to Christ to be free from the wrath *you* deserve?
- a). Only then will you be in a place to enjoy any of these blessings  
They are for a very limited audience – those who have God as their Father
- Transition:** In the next verse Paul begins to list the blessings that come into our life (Eph 1:3-14)
- A. Starting with where they come from – the source
- B. We are entering the loftiest teaching in the NT – let's take some time to introduce it

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## INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 1:3-14

- 1. Ephesians 1:3-14 Paul is listing the blessings that come to us in Christ by grace**
- A. Paul outlines God's plan for salvation – past – present and future
- 1). Verses 3-6a – We are shown the past aspect of salvation = Election
- 2). Verses 6b-11 We are shown the present aspect = Redemption
- 3). Verses 12-14 We are shown the future aspect = Inheritance

- C. We also see the work of the Trinity in our salvation
  - 1). Verses 3-6a – We see the work of the Father
  - 2). Verses 6b-11 We see the work of the Son
  - 3). Verses 12-14 We see the work of the Spirit

## 2. We will see that God’s plan for salvation is not anything new

- A. It didn’t start at a decision we made for him a few years ago
  - 1). It started with a decision he made of us before the ages began  
**Eph 1:4 (ESV)** even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world...
- B. This means we have always been in his mind – have always been looked upon as his
  - 1). This explains your protection from so many stupid things - “He is mine! Protect him!”
  - 2). I’m sure the angels thought – Him! Yours! “Yes, Mine! Protect him”
- C. So God’s eternal plan was to draw me to himself – and set me on that path he had planned  
I have been brought into purposes formulated for me from eternity past
  - 1). That gives life meaning – brought into the eternal purposes of God!  
I’m not just living to pay bills – I’m living to do something that will last for eternity!

**Transition:** I love what happens to Paul as he thinks about the theology in this section

## 3. As Paul thinks of God’s grace and all that means to his children – he goes off!

- A. Ephesians 1:3-14 is the longest sentence in the NT
  - 1). 202 words without any punctuation – try handing that into an English teacher!

**Thought:** This is the fruit of a God-centered – God exalting rather than man exalting theology

- A. It ignites praise and worship – makes you write 202 Word sentences! Because your so caught up!
- B. This is what theology is supposed to do
  - 1). Shame on these men who have taught up as dead – cold facts  
It is alive – it speaks of God’s majesty – what he has done for a wretch like me!
    - a). It amazes me – it grips my heart – it captures my affections
  - 2). Theology is the kindling that moves the heart to worship – you see that here in Paul
    - a). It causes Paul to erupt in spontaneous praise! He can’t help it  
**Frederick W. Faber:** Deep theology is the best fuel of devotion; it readily catches fire and, once kindled, it burns long.
  - 3). This is the argument for those “I don’t want theology – I just want to live for Jesus”
    - a). Theology tells you how to live and why you should live that way
    - b). It tells you how great God is so you’ll want to live for him like you should
    - c). It tells you the resources available to you so you can live like you should
      - 1a). There is nothing more helpful for practical Christian living than theology
      - 2a). Digging into the great themes like we find in the book of Ephesians  
**C. H. Spurgeon:** Certain doctrines would not make a mouse stir its ears; the grand old doctrines of grace stir our blood, quicken our pulse, and fill our whole being with enthusiasm.
      - 3a). The church is filled with light non-mouse ear stirring teaching  
That is not enough to sustain you – move you – capture you!

**Transition:** Another thing we need to know before we dig in

## 4. This whole section is a doxology – praising God for his work in our salvation

**Eph 1:3 (ESV)** *Blessed be the God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ...

- A. There is no room for man to take any credit here – this is about God and his work
- B. Paul is reminding us how we come to enjoy the blessings of God

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- 1). Because he has chosen to bless us in his Son by grace
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### III. BLESSED BY GOD THE FATHER IN CHRIST

#### 1. Paul as always begins with God

- A. Praising him because of who he is and what he has done
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##### First: We Praise God Because He Is God

- A. If he never did anything for us personally – never sent his son – never got involved in our hopelessness  
He would still be worthy of praise because of his person – his glory - and majesty
- B. Paul's focus on God is important for Joy – God first – a huge view of Him
  - 1). We can be so self-centered making everything in Christianity about us
    - a). It's all about our experience – our blessings – our feelings
  - 2). we spend so much time looking at us – we lose our joy – we see every spiritual hiccup
    - a). We lose the glory of grace – the thrill of knowing Him and seeing his majesty
  - 3). It's like standing at the entrance to Yosemite Valley – Tunnel view  
Turning our back on that majestic view – taking out a mirror and staring at us
    - a). Then thinking Yosemite is just alright – you ruined it by fixating on you!
  - 4). How many think Christianity's just alright because they concentrate on them instead of God?
    - a). Don't bring Christianity down to your level – you're just alright and so am I

**Transition:** Paul starts where everything in Christianity starts – with God – it's about him

- A. We praise him because of who he is AND because of what he's done
    - 1). In this doxology Paul is praising him for his gracious work in our lives
    - 2). In verse 3 we see the source of blessing and the channel they flow through
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#### God the Father Is the Source of Blessing

Eph 1:3 (ESV) *Blessed be the God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, *who has blessed us...*

#### 1. All the blessings flow from him

- A. He will go on to list some of those amazing blessings in this chapter
- B. This chapter should turn you into a worshipper! Pray that happens with all of us

#### 2. What blessings come from God? **Every** spiritual blessing flows from him

Eph 1:3 (ESV) Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ *with every spiritual blessing...*

- A. Spiritual here is simply speaking of the origin of the blessing  
They all come from God the Father – through Jesus Christ – by the Holy Spirit
  - 1). Whether it is spiritual or material – it is a spiritual blessing because it comes from God  
**James put it this way: Jas 1:17 (ESV) Every** good gift and **every** perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights...
    - a). Thank God for every good thing that comes into your life – how grateful we should be!
- B. Peter put it this way – talking about the extent of the blessings flowing from God  
**2 Pe 1:3 (ESV)** His divine power has granted to us *all things* that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence,
  - 1). All things that pertain to life (materially) and godliness (spiritually)
    - a). Flow into our life through him and his power
  - 2). This means we don't have to beg for anything else to be able to live for him

- a). We just need to start applying what he's already given to us  
Peter says we are fully equipped to live out the Christian life successfully
  - 3). People pray "God give us the power to live for you"  
You don't need more power – you have plenty available to use  
**Look at: Eph 1:19–20 (ESV)** and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, *according to the working of his great might <sup>(20)</sup> that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places,*
  - a). He raised Christ from the dead when all of hell was trying to hold him there
    - 1a). His power that raised Christ is given to you – it is enough
  - C. Objection: I'm just an ordinary Christian – I can't live the life God expects – Wrong!
    - 1). There's no such thing as "Just an ordinary Christian"
      - a). You have been given everything you need by God  
You have power that is off the charts available to you in Him  
God lives within you!
    - 2). You just need to appropriate it by faith – stepping out depending upon it
- Transition:** We are blessed with everything we need to be saved and to live that salvation out
- A. Where do these blessings take place

## We Enjoy These Blessings in the Heavenly Places

**Eph 1:3 (ESV)** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing *in the heavenly places,*

### 1. Heavenly places defined

- A. Speaking about the entire supernatural realm of God – His complete domain – heaven and earth
  - 1). We see this in Ephesians 6 – where heavenly places speak of earth  
**Eph 6:12 (ESV)** For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil *in the heavenly places.*
  - a). I'm fighting on earth – but it is referred to as being in the heavenly places
  - b). Heavenly places = God's domain wherever that may be

### 2. The Christian lives in a paradox – a heavenly life lived out on earth

- A. We are to be heavenly minded while living on earth
- B. We are to live like a citizen of heaven while living on earth  
**Php 3:20 (ESV)** But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
  - 1). Heavens my home not earth – I'm a pilgrim just passing through – keeping a light touch
  - 2). My king dwells there - I'm an ambassador left on earth to proclaim his message
  - 3). I am anticipating and looking forward to his coming
- C. All this is why Paul says in Colossians  
**Col 3:1 (ESV)** If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
  - 1). You have risen – you are a citizen of heaven – this world is not the main attraction any longer  
**Ga 6:14 (ESV)** But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.
    - a). I'm so glad my eyes have been lifted above THIS!  
That I KNOW there is more and I can live for MORE than just this

### 3. The Christian lives with supplies sent from heaven

- A. We hear stories of our soldiers going without what they need to perform in foreign wars

- 1). That will never happen to us as believers – the supply lines are always open
- B. We are called to be ambassadors – called to the war – sent to the front lines
  - 1). We engage in a war against ourselves – putting to death the deeds of the flesh  
**Rom 8:13-14 (NIV)** For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, (14) because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.
  - 2). We are actively pushing forward the kingdom of God – fighting for truth – for souls
    - a). We are told here that all the blessings – resources - we need will be supplied
    - b). We are engaged in war while constantly being supplied by heaven

**Transition:** But we cannot miss the channel these flow into our lives through

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## These Blessings Come from God Through Christ

**Eph 1:3 (ESV)** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us *in Christ* with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places,

### 1. How important we don't skip that

- A. Many believe they will be blessed by God because they believe in God - religious
  - 1). They are earnest – Muslim at Spectrum – memorized Koran
  - 2). JW at door on Saturday – Mormon on mission trip – zealous but lost
- B. Every blessing comes to us through Christ
  - 1). If Christ isn't your Savior don't expect God's blessing – it's not for you

### 2. What are the blessing I have in Christ – everything he has

**Ro 8:16–17 (ESV)** The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, <sup>(17)</sup> and if children, then heirs—heirs of God *and fellow heirs with Christ...*

- A. His resources are our resources, His righteousness is our righteousness, and His power is our power.  
 His position is our position. His privilege is our privilege.  
 His possession is our possession: what He has, we have.

**Point:** We are so blessed. This should produce great joy, gratitude and worship

- A. There shouldn't be so many miserable Christians – they must not know what God has done  
**Augustine:** “A Christian should be an Alleluia from head to foot”
  - 1). That's Paul in Ephesians 1 – I pray all of us will become that – Joy-filled fanatics!

**Transition:** So we've just dipped our toes into the shallows of the great depths of this chapter

- A. Be praying for me – that is your job! You want life-changing preaching – pray for it!

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## CONCLUSION

### 1. We've looked at grace and peace

- A. Christianity is all about God's grace given to those who don't deserve it  
 The result of that grace is peace – WITH God and OF God
- B. You can't earn your salvation – it is a gift given to those who simply believe

### 2. We started to look at the blessings that come to us from grace

- A. The source is God – the channel they come through is Christ
  - 1). They meet everything we need spiritually and materially