

Eph 1:1 (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:

1. Last week we looked at who the blessings for this epistle are for

- A. Paul lays out 3 characteristics – what Lloyd-Jones called the “Irreducible minimum” of a believer
 - 1). These three qualities are something every believer has to see to some degree
 - 2). If you don’t have them the riches of these blessings are not for you

2. The Christian is a Saint

- A. This means they are set apart for God and separated from the world
 - 1). When they embraced Christ by faith they naturally turned away from sin

3. The Christian is Faithful

- A. Word = to exercise faith in
 - 1). The Christian is one who believes the Bible is God’s book and all its truths are trustworthy
 - 2). They believe all the truths about God, His Son and themselves
 - a). Such as: They are born linked to Adam and guilty before God
 - b). The only remedy for that guilt and the wrath it deserves is faith in Christ
- B. “Faithful” also means to be faithful to those truths we claim to believe
 - 1). We are not chameleon Christians – determining how we’ll act by who we are around
 - a). A follower of Christ follows him at work – vacation – neighborhood – in church
 - 2). Interesting – I’m hearing more and more what we should stop using “Christian”
 - a). It has become a deceptive term – any interest in Christ at all = I’m a Christian!
 - 1a). Regardless of how they live
 - b). They suggest we start using “Followers of Christ” instead
 - 1a). That is what the Bible says – one who is saved and forgiven is
Jn 10:27 (ESV) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.
 - 2a). If you’re not following the shepherd – how can you be one of his sheep

Transition: Now we move to that 3rd “Irreducible minimum” of the believer

- A. Today we want to look at what it means to be “in Christ”
 - 1). Those two words are as rich as any in the English language
- B. We are going to go through 13 things over the next couple weeks
 - 1). This started out – I was going to quickly talk about “In Christ” and move on
 - a). As I studied it just kept expanding and expanding – “I have to share this with my friends”
- C. My goal I want you to see how blessed you are! What it means to be somebody who is “In Christ”

I. THE BLESSING OF BEING IN CHRIST

These blessings begin way back before the world was even created

In Christ you were given grace before the world was created

TURN: 2 Ti 1:8–9 (ESV) Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁽⁹⁾ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace, *which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,*

1. Paul encourages Timothy not to be ashamed to name the name of Christ

- A. Don’t let the fear of man stop you from proclaiming the gospel even if it brings about suffering
Depend upon God and his power to enable you to bring him glory in it

2. Paul tells Timothy (and us) why this is a reasonable attitude to have

- A. We should be bold for him because he has been so gracious and wonderful to us

We should not be ashamed to tell others about the one who loves us like this

He Saved Us

- A. He has delivered us from the penalty of sin – the record is clean

He Called Us

- A. This is God’s side of our salvation – what the theologians refer to as God’s “Effectual calling”

- 1). This is that divine call that draws a man into salvation

Ro 1:5–6 (ESV) through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, ⁽⁶⁾ including you who are *called to belong to Jesus Christ,*

Rom 8:30 (NIV) And those he predestined, *he also called;* those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.

- B. This call to salvation was not a result of anything in me

- 1). It flowed to me simply out of the grace of God – “Unmerited Favor”
2). It was based on his work not mine

- C. We’re always trying to figure out why God chose us? Stop it.

- 1). I think that’s because of pride – he chose me because “I was...”

- a). Did he see something in me that he could use? Bill would be handy in my kingdom!
Did he see some character he really liked?

I just read: “God planned my life for a designated purpose because He knew the good I would do with it.”

- 2). Forget that! It is unmerited favor – it is not because you were anything

- a). You were a sinner and a rebel – you were hostile towards God

Listen to Paul’s words. Here you are: 1 Cor 1:26-29 (NIV) Brothers, think of what you were *when you were called.* Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. (27) But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. (28) He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, (29) **(Why?)** so that no one may boast before him.

- C. Listen to who gets the glory for your salvation

1 Cor 1:30-31 (NIV) *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus,* who has become for us wisdom from God--that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. (31) **Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."**

- D. If we’ve done anything good in our life for Christ – He has done it

2 Cor 3:5-6 (NLT) It is not that we think we can do anything of lasting value by ourselves. Our only power and success come from God. (6) He is the one who has enabled us to represent his new covenant.

- 1). NIV “He has made us competent as ministers of the New covenant

Point: Because of His love we were chosen in spite of who we were not BECAUSE of who we were

- A. If you could figure out any reason you were saved – it is no longer grace

- 1). Grace is undeserved – unmerited favor

- B. I love truth that humbles man and exalts God! Religious people hate it – I love it!

- 1). This drives worship deep into my heart – God loves me!

Question: But when was this grace given to me?

(Grace) Which He Gave Us in Christ Jesus Before the Ages Began...

- A. When did Jesus Christ become your savior in God’s eyes – before time began!

- B. When you were chosen – before the world began (1:4) this grace was given to you in Christ

Transition: Let’s look at that one – chosen before the foundation of the world

- A. Won’t spend much time here – we will look at more in depth in a couple of weeks

In Christ Jesus you were chosen by God before creation

This is what is referred to as election

TURN: Eph 1:4 (ESV) even as he chose us *in him* before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.

1. He chose us in him – again based on God’s grace – not man’s merit

Context: Eph 1:4–6 (ESV) even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁽⁵⁾ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁽⁶⁾ *to the praise of his glorious grace*, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

A. This choice was not based on any merit found in man at all

1). The choice was made before the foundation of the world – before we could merit anything

B. AND It was not based on man first choosing God

Jn 1:11–13 (ESV) He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. ⁽¹²⁾ But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, *he gave the right to become children of God*, ⁽¹³⁾ who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh *nor of the will of man, but of God*.

J. Vernon McGee: The late Dr. Harry A. Ironside told this story. A little boy was asked, “Have you found Jesus?” The little fellow answered, “Sir, I didn’t know He was lost. But I was lost and He found me.” My friend, you don’t find Jesus. *He* finds you. He is the One who went out after the lost sheep, and He is the One who found that sheep.

God chose believers in Christ before the foundation of the world, way back in eternity past. That means that you and I didn’t do the choosing. He did not choose us because we were good or because we would do some good, but He did choose us so that we *could* do some good. The entire choice is thrown back upon the sovereignty of the wisdom and goodness of God alone. It was Charles Spurgeon who once said, “I’m glad God chose me before I was born, because he certainly wouldn’t have chosen me after.” It is God who has chosen us—we have not chosen Him. The Lord Jesus said to His own in the Upper Room, “Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you ...” (John 15:16). Dr. G. Campbell Morgan commented, “That puts the responsibility on Him. If He did the choosing, then He’s responsible.” That makes it quite wonderful!

A. Our son is adopted – we chose him – he didn’t chose us

1). When we made that choice WE became responsible – to take care of all of his needs

Thought: We are going to look at all this as we move on in the coming weeks

A. But I’m telling you right now that God has so designed salvation that it is all by grace

1). If you are looking for anything in you that would merit salvation - STOP

2). You brought your sin to the table – all you had to offer – But God brought grace

TURN: Eph 2:8–9 (ESV) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁽⁹⁾ not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

a). Salvation is a free gift given to those who could do nothing to earn it

B. It had to be by grace – you were spiritually dead – dead men can’t earn anything

Eph 2:5 (ESV) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—

1). We were chosen and given grace before time began – *we were always a part of his plan!*

C. I want you by the time we finish Ephesians to be so grateful to God because of what he’s done

1). I want you to see how breathtaking his grace in your life is

To ignite your heart and bring you to a place where you MUST worship him

2). Again! Your part! Pray for me. Pray for the preaching. Pray for the congregation.

Transition: What were the purposes he chose us for – Paul gives us some of the answer

3. That we would be “holy and without blame before him.”

A. This describes our legal standing in Christ

1). In him we are seen as having kept the law perfectly - God has nothing against us

B. This also describes a practical lifestyle – legally we are holy and without blame IN CHRIST

1). Practically we are to live like who we are legally = sanctification

Transition: McGee quoting G. Campbell Morgan

“That puts the responsibility on Him. If He did the choosing, then He’s responsible.”

A. Next one shows us he takes that responsibility very seriously

In Christ Jesus you are loved by God with an inseparable love

TURN: Ro 8:38–39 (ESV) For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, ⁽³⁹⁾ nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God *in Christ Jesus* our Lord.

1. Paul thinks of everything he can that could separate us from the love of God

A. How William MacDonald puts it:

Death with all its terrors; **Life** with all its allurements;

Angels and rulers (principalities), supernatural in power and knowledge

Powers, whether human tyrants or angelic adversaries;

Things present, crashing in upon us. **Things to come**, arousing fearful forebodings;

Height nor depth, those things that are in the realm of dimension or space, including occult forces.

B. Then just in case he missed something he adds: **Nor anything else in all creation**

2. The result of his search – his conclusion

Ro 8:39 (ESV) NOTHING...will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

A. I believe the true believer is secure in the grip of God – He holds us rather than us holding him

Thought: Turn to: **John 10:27-29** – is an interesting verse

A. Some object to eternal security – if I think I can’t lose my salvation – I’ll just sin it up

If you’re really saved you won’t! Why? Because of God’s work in you when you were saved

TURN: Jn 10:27–29 (ESV) My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. ⁽²⁸⁾ I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ⁽²⁹⁾ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.

A. Verse 27 shows who the saved are – those who hear their Lord’s voice and follow him

1). That is the proof they have eternal life – that God has changed them

2). That they have that new heart and the Spirit residing in them

B. Listen to what God says happens when a person is saved in the New Covenant – US

Ezek 36:25-27 (NIV) I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. (26) I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (27) *And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.*

1). The evidence all that has happened is that you now listen to Christ and follow him

a). If you don’t care what he says – if you don’t follow him – not one of his sheep

b). These verses are true of every genuine believer – not perfect but characteristics

C. What is the assurance for the true believer – continue on

Jn 10:28–29 (ESV) I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. ⁽²⁹⁾ My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father’s hand.

1). Jesus says I have given you eternal life – not temporal life

Paul put it this way: Php 1:6 (ESV) And I am sure of this, *that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.*

a). He that began that good work of calling you into salvation

Will continue that work until you are in glory with Christ

- 2). To guarantee that work is finished – He and the Father are active in keeping us
 - a). Jesus promises - No one will snatch you out of his hand
Adds: My Father is greater than me - No one will snatch you out of his hands
 - b). This is what the theologians call *“The double grip of security.”*

Thought: Notice who Jesus gives eternal life too – did you see it there?

- A. Those whom the Father has given to him – those God chose in Eph. 1:4 – he gives to Jesus
 - 1). The Father has given the believer (you and I) to his Son as a gift of love
 - a). A people who will serve him and worship him
- B. This thought of the Father giving the Son who he’s chosen is common in the NT

TURN: Jn 6:37 (ESV) *All that the Father gives me will come to me*, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

- 1). Look at the will of the Father – the responsibility he has given to Christ
Jn 6:38 (ESV) For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.
What is His will? Jn 6:39 (ESV) And this *is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day.*
- 2). Verse 44 – tells us who gets credit for our salvation – why we went to Christ in the first place
And what will happen after we go
Jn 6:44 (ESV) No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him. And I will raise him up on the last day.

- C. We find the same thought in Jesus prayer to the Father

Jn 17:1–2 (ESV) When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, “Father, the hour has come; glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, ⁽²⁾ since you have given him authority over all flesh, *to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.*

Jn 17:6 (ESV) “I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. *Yours they were, and you gave them to me*, and they have kept your word.

- 1). That is the Apostles and everybody else that believes in Christ through their Word
Jn 17:20 (ESV) “I do not ask for these only (The Apostles), but also for those who will believe in me through their word,
- 2). The assurance – Jesus prayers are always answered
Jn 17:24 (ESV) Father, I desire that they also, *whom you have given me, may be with me where I am*, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Thought: One holds onto a valuable gift. Especially one given by the Father

- A. Jesus protects those God him
- B. But the Father sees that gift as precious too – and He protects them
 - 1). Together they make sure the one they chose and called will be in glory with them

Ro 8:29–30 (ESV) For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. ⁽³⁰⁾ *And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified.*

- a). Notice all past tense! In God’s mind it is as good as done!

Summary: God the Father gave us to Jesus as a gift. He also gave Jesus the responsibility of keeping us.

- A. Do you think he would fail at this?

Jn 8:29 (ESV) And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, *for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.”*

Transition: So Chosen by God before time began – grace given in Christ before time began

- A. Now the one God chooses he gives to his Son as a love gift

- 1). And the Father and Son conspire together to keep that individual until they are in glory

Transition: The next one we’ll see in depth as we go through the book – just mention it now

In Christ Jesus you were redeemed and forgiven for all your sins.

TURN: Eph 1:7 (ESV) In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

1. Redemption is a word right out of the slave market

- A. You would pay the slave owner whatever cost he demanded to purchase or set free that slave
 - 1). Christ paid the price demanded to set us free from sin – his life – his blood
 - 2). In so doing we are forgiven from all our trespasses – the books are wiped clean

Transition: See that more in detail in a few weeks. Let’s look at our fifth benefit of being In Christ

In Christ Jesus you are justified before God and the righteousness of God in Christ is imputed to you

TURN: 2 Co 5:21 (ESV) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that *in him* we might become the righteousness of God.

1. Here we have the doctrine of substitution

- A. Here we see how the life and death of Christ benefit those who are “in him.”

The Death of Christ And It’s Benefit to Us

2 Co 5:21 (ESV) For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin...

1. Doesn’t mean Christ became a sinner on the cross – he was holy

- A. This means God treated Christ on the cross AS IF he had sinned our sins
Even though he never sinned once
 - 1). Imputation – God took our sins – moved them into his account
He was judged in our place – receiving the wrath our sins had earned

The Life of Christ And It’s Benefit to Us

2 Co 5:21 (ESV) ...so that *in him* we might become the righteousness of God.

1. Christ earned a righteous standing by his perfect obedience

- A. He fulfilled all the righteous requirements demanded by God to merit heaven
Mt 3:13–15 (ESV) Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. ⁽¹⁴⁾ John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” ⁽¹⁵⁾ But Jesus answered him, *“Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.”* Then he consented.
 - 1). That baptism was part of the righteous requirements that must be fulfilled to merit heaven
 - 2). This is the answer of why Jesus work of redemption took as long as it did
 - a). If it was just going to the cross – it could have been done in a weekend
 - b). Why 33 years? I believe it took that time to fulfill all the righteous requirements
- B. Jesus came to earth – lived life as a man – and earned a righteous standing he could give to us
 - 1). He did for us what was required of us to get into heaven
Ro 5:19 (ESV) For as by the one man’s disobedience the many were made sinners, *so by the one man’s obedience the many will be made righteous.*
- C. It took both his life and his death for us to get into heaven
 - 1). His life earned us the righteousness we needed to get in
 - 2). His death took away that record of sin that would have kept us out

Transition: Back to imputation – how his life benefits us

2. The imputation of righteousness

- A. First half of this great verse – God took our sin and placed it into Christ’s account
 - 1). Then treated Christ as if he had lived our life and sinned our sin – though he never sinned once
- B. Then God takes Christ perfect obedience to all the righteous requirements
And puts that into our account
 - 1). And treats us as if we had lived his life of perfect obedience
- C. I get what Christ earned = Access to God and dwelling in eternal glory
He gets what I deserved = The wrath of God for my sin

Transition: We have seen 5 wonderful benefits of being IN CHRIST

- A. We have been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world - election
We have been given grace in Christ at that same time
In Christ we are loved by God with an inseparable love – eternal security
In Christ we were redeemed and forgiven – legally there is nothing against us
In Christ we have been made righteous – We have been given what we need to go to heaven
- B. Next week we’ll continue on with the benefits of being “In Christ”
 - 1). A lot of this is refresher from our last series – but we need reminders – lose it so quickly

II. HOW DO I RECEIVE THESE BENEFITS

1. I need to move from being outside of Christ to be in Christ

- A. When the Gospel was preached to unbelievers, they were encouraged and called to belief *into* Jesus
 - 1). There are two words translated “in” when it relates to Jesus Christ – “En” and “Eis”
 - a). Scripture uses both when it speaks of faith in Christ – this is important
- B. “Eis” speaks of movement – moving from outside to inside
 - 1). If you’re standing out at the greeters table and come into the sanctuary
That is “Eis” – You were outside but you moved *into* the room
 - 2). But after moving into the room “Eis” - you are “in” the room “En”
- C. That is what happens when we exercise saving faith in Christ
 - 1). We move from outside of Christ “Eis”
Into that permanent state of being “In Christ” “En”

2. It is faith that takes us from outside of Christ and lost to inside and saved

- A. It is not by trying to be better – more religious – more sincere
- B. It is by seeing the truth that you’ll never be good enough to merit heaven
 - 1). It is casting yourself upon Christ alone – depending upon His mercy
It is placing your faith in His finished work for you
 - 2). No longer trusting in what you do for God
But trusting in what God has done for you

Eph 2:8–9 (ESV) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, ⁽⁹⁾ *not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

2 Ti 1:8–9 (ESV) Therefore do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, nor of me his prisoner, but share in suffering for the gospel by the power of God, ⁽⁹⁾ who saved us and called us to a holy calling, *not because of our works but because of his own purpose and grace*, which he gave us in Christ Jesus before the ages began,