

Our Doxology

Ephesians 1:3-14

The old man was nearly blind as he reached out to touch the face and hands of his son. "It is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." The aged hands felt the hairy forearms, not realizing that they were wrapped with the skin of a goat to simulate those of his twin brother.

The scene was one of intrigue and deception and Jacob plotted to steal that which his father had allotted to his brother Esau. What was at stake? A plot of ground? A large sum of money? Power? Prestige? No, it was all for a BLESSING.

We don't normally put so much stock in a blessing. But perhaps we should. Especially when we note how Paul opens his epistle to the Ephesians. Listen to verses 3-14:

- 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,**
- 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,**
- 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,**
- 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.**
- 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace**
- 8 which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence,**
- 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself,**
- 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth; in Him.**
- 11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will,**
- 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.**
- 13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,**
- 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.**

Today we continue our verse-by-verse study through Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Some people have called Ephesians "God's love letter to the church." So, since God is still God, and we are His church, I can't wait to see what He has to say to us. I feel just like the little boy who has just gotten a letter from his dad who is away for months serving on a ship in the Navy. Picture him running back from the mailbox waving the letter in his hand. He runs in the house yelling, "I got a letter, I got a letter!" Then he carefully tears open the envelope and pulls

out the letter inside. Think of his excitement as he slowly and carefully pores over each word. That's the way I feel when I read this wonderful letter called Ephesians.

In 1988 Orel Hershiser was just coming off his phenomenal Cy Young Award season when he hurled a record 59 consecutive scoreless innings pitching for the Los Angeles Dodgers. They had just won the World Series over the Oakland As. One of the broadcasts during the series showed Hershiser in the dugout just before the 9th inning started. He was leaning against the wall. And his lips were moving.

So when he was a guest on the Tonight Show, Johnny Carson asked him what he had been saying. "I wasn't saying anything," Orel responded. "Well, then, tell us what you were doing." Finally Orel replied, "I was singing." Johnny said, "You were singing? I didn't know you were a singer. Come on, let's hear it!" And Orel said, "Nah. I don't want to." And the audience clapped and said, "Yeah! Let's hear it! Wooooh!!!!"

Finally, Orel Hershiser started to sing: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise him above Ye heavenly host. Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost! Amen!" And Johnny Carson was speechless. The whole audience was dead silent. Then one person stood up and started clapping. And soon, the whole audience joined in applause.

This was Orel Hershiser's way of saying, "Lord, the only reason I'm a Most Valuable Player is because you're a Most Valuable God. You're the reason why my life has been so blessed. And I respect you. And I love you."

That's exactly what Paul is saying in Ephesians 1. "**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,**" In other words, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow!" Paul is saying "I praise You, Father, for all the blessings You have given us in Christ."

In fact verses 3-14 in chapter one are all about praising God from whom all blessings flow. The word, "**Blessed**" at the beginning of verse 3 is the word *eulogetos* from which we get our English word, eulogy. It comes from two Greek words, *eu*, meaning "good" and *logos*, meaning "word." So it literally means to speak a good word, to say that God is good. So we bless God, or praise God for all His blessings to us.

When we bless God we speak good of Him. When God blesses us, He bestows good to us. We bless Him with what we say. He blesses us by who He is and what He does. All we can do is to speak well of Him because in ourselves we have nothing good to give.

Now there is an unusual structure in this passage to which I'd like to call your attention. From Verse 3 through Verse 14 in the Greek text (not in the English) you have one complete, unbroken sentence. If you want to get the effect of it, take a deep breath and try to read it through with one breath. You will see how much Paul has crammed into this great sentence. We couldn't possibly cover in one message all that is wrapped up in these great truths, and I don't want to attempt it. But let me give you a quick outline.

The great sentence is made up of three great divisions. Each part focuses on one person of the Godhead. Verses 3-6 focus on will God, the Father, **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.”** Verses 7-12 focus on the work of God, the Son, **“In Him we have redemption through His blood.”** And verses 13-14 focus on the witness of God, the Holy Spirit, **“you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”**

This whole passage is often called a doxology. We sang a doxology after we gave our offering. Orel Hershisier sang a doxology in the dugout. A doxology is a song or statement that gives glory to God. A doxology recites what God has done and expresses worship to Him. Each of these portions (3-6, 7-12, and 13-14) ends with a statement of praise to the glory of God.

You can see the first one in verse 6, **“to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.”** After describing the blessing we have from the work of Christ, Paul writes in verse 12, **“that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.”** And then after showing us the blessings of having the Holy Spirit in our lives Paul concludes verse 14 with, **“to the praise of His glory.”**

In each of these Paul uses the phrase, **“to the praise of His glory,”** (or the glory). The word praise in each of these is *epainos* meaning to praise upon, or praise above.

Outline of Ephesians 1:3-14:

I. Praise for the Will of the Father (3-6).

The Basis of our salvation: God the Father planned the church.

- A. Appointed to be holy (1:4).**
- B. Adopted as His sons (1:5).**
- C. Accepted in the Beloved (1:6).**

II. Praise for the Work of the Son (7-12).

The Benefits of our salvation: God the Son paid the price for the church.

- A. He Redeemed us by His blood—We are forgiven (1:7-8).**
- B. He Revealed His will to us (1:9-10).**
- C. He Realized an inheritance for us (1:11-12)**

III. Praise for the Witness of the Spirit (13-14).

The Bestowment of our salvation: God the Holy Spirit protects the church.

- A. He guards us as God’s seal (1:13).**
- B. He guarantees our inheritance (1:14).**

So Many Blessings - When disaster strikes, people are exceedingly generous in their outpouring of assistance. After the terrorist attacks in September 2001, New York City was flooded with an estimated \$75 million worth of towels, blankets, flashlights, water bottles, canned beans, shovels, toothpaste, stuffed animals, radios, rubber boots, and thousands of other items. There was so much stuff that those affected could not use it all.

This reminds me of what happens when we turn in faith to Christ as our Savior. We were facing a personal disaster. Our sins put us in danger of an eternity of separation from God. The future was dark, hopeless.

But God had already planned the solution. The Father planned salvation in Jesus Christ. Jesus stepped in and provided our salvation through giving His life for us. The Holy Spirit did the work of bringing us to Christ. When we trusted in Jesus, our heavenly Father lavished us with spiritual riches. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. We have more blessings than we can possibly imagine. The blessings of being a Christian just keep on coming. They'll never run out. What a generous, thoughtful God we serve! Let's praise Him for the countless blessings that overflow in our lives.

Will you praise Him today?

Praise the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Give Him the honor, the glory, the worship He deserves.

Praise Him for enriching us with every spiritual blessing.

Praise Him for choosing us in Christ before creation.

Praise Him that in His love he made us holy and blameless.

Praise Him for adopting us into His family.

Praise Him for accepting us in the Beloved.

Praise the Lord for redeeming us by His blood.

Praise Him for forgiving our sins.

Praise Him for His glorious grace that He lavished on us.

Praise Him for revealing to us the purpose of His will.

Praise Him for bringing us together in Christ.

Praise Him for the inheritance we have in Christ.

Praise Him enabling us to believe, to trust in Christ.

Praise Him for His Holy Spirit of promise who seals us.

Praise Him for guaranteeing of our inheritance by His Spirit.

Praise Him for purchasing us as His own possession.

Praise helps us live with greater power, perspective, and persistence to a praiseworthy God. Praise helps us have a greater hope in our God who is able to overcome any discouragement. Praise enables us to understand God's purpose and will. Praise is the purpose for which we were chosen, redeemed, and sealed.

Is my life a doxology to God?