

EXPOSITION OF EPHESIANS

Message #4

Ephesians 1:7-12

I want you imagine for a moment that you are bound tight with ropes so that you cannot even move your hands or feet and you have cement blocks tied to your legs and you are thrown into a lake. The moment you hit the water you are sinking to your death which will be by drowning. You have no chance of saving yourself and there is nothing you can do to get out of your condition. At the very moment you are speeding toward your watery grave a strong hand grabs you and pulls you up out of the water and saves your life. That person saves you and takes off all of the ropes that are binding you and the blocks weighing you down and sets you free. What would you say to that person who just saved you? Would you say, "I did it?" Would you say "Isn't it great I chose to let you save me?" If you have any brain at all you would look at this person and say "thank you." "Thank you for saving my life." "I owe you everything."

Now I want you to consider the fact that you are a sinner and you are sinking fast in this world toward eternal condemnation. You have sinned with your thoughts, you have sinned with your actions, and you have sinned with your speech. Your sin is pulling you down toward eternal death. You have no chance of getting out of this condition in and of yourself. There is nothing you can do to save yourself. But at one moment of time, God, in His amazing grace, takes His strong hand and grabs you and pulls you from death and gives you life.

Now you would think that any person with a sane brain would look at God and say thank you. But unfortunately that is not what too many do. Many want to take credit for God saving them. They want to elevate their own choice and their own decision. Many want you to believe that they are so good they actually floated up themselves to a relationship with God. These people are theologically delusional because **the fact is anyone who is saved is solely and only saved by the sovereign grace of the Sovereign God.**

That is exactly what Paul wanted believers to understand about grace. God is not only to be thanked, but He is to be praised and worshipped for extending His grace to sinners. Last time we were together we saw that God the Father was to be praised because of His elective grace. He chose us before the foundation of the world. He chose us, He predestined us, He adopted us and He loved us. He did it all. Now Paul wants us to even know more about this grace package and what we see here is that:

GOD THE FATHER IS TO BE PRAISED BECAUSE OF EVERYTHING HE HAS GIVEN US IN GRACE THROUGH GOD THE SON.

The entire grace package is found "in Christ," "in Him." There is no grace package apart from Jesus Christ and His sacrificial work. If you are wise, you will praise and worship God for this. Now you may ask for what exactly may I praise God? There are three main "in Christ" grace blessings for which you may praise God:

IN CHRIST GRACE BLESSING #1 – We are to praise God because in Christ we have
redemption . **1:7-8**

There is a great deal of theology we may learn in these verses about the doctrine of redemption. First, let's start with the word "redemption." As we have examined in our study of soteriology, the doctrine of salvation, there are three Greek words that may be translated into English by the word "redemption."

- 1) Agorazo (αγοραζω) = to purchase a horse at the market and leave it in the market.
- 2) Exagorazo (εξαγοραζω) = to purchase a horse at the market and take it home for yourself.
- 3) Lutroo (λυτρωω) = to purchase a horse in the market and set it free.

Now it is a form of this third word that is used here. This particular verb has a variety of shades to it:

- A. Lutron (λυτρον) = is the noun form which means to pay a ransom and set something free.
- B. Lutrosis (λυτρωσις) = is a noun form that also emphasizes paying the redemptive price for deliverance.
- C. Apolutrosis (απολυτρωσις) = to purchase a horse at the market and set it free the moment you own it. This word emphasizes the market from which you delivered the horse.

The specific word used here for "redemption" is this word. This word is used three times in Ephesians (1:7, 14; 4:30). **The emphasis of this word is that the full price has been paid to release and deliver one from a terrible state or condition.**

Jesus Christ has paid the complete price for us required by God to get us out of our condemnatory state. Jesus Christ paid the full price for us so that He could purchase us from our sinful condition which deserved the wrath of God. The moment we believe in Him we have been set free from all our condemnatory sins that would and should lead us to the wrath of God. This is pure grace redemption. Paul develops the theology of redemption which should prompt us to praise God.

Now there are four redemptive facts that Paul reveals to us:

(Redemptive Fact #1) – Our redemption is in Christ , not in us . **1:7a**

Here is shocking news to proud arrogant man. You cannot redeem yourself. There is nothing you can do and there is nothing you can pay to get yourself out of your sinful condition that is heading to the wrath of God. You cannot earn redemption. You do not merit redemption. You do not deserve redemption. Redemption will never be found in any sinful human being. Every human is in need of redemption because, ever since Adam, we are all sinners. So if we are all sinners and if we are all condemned, then where can we find redemption? Redemption is found in one Person and that Person is Jesus Christ. The entire redemptive plan of God is found in Jesus Christ and not in us.

(Redemptive Fact #2) – Our redemption is through Christ’s blood. 1:7b

That preposition “through” tells us exactly how it was that we were redeemed; we were redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ. That is the redemptive ransom price He paid to set us free. Redemption is blood redemption; without it there is no redemption (Heb. 9:22). The Apostle Peter reveals critical doctrine on this point when he said “knowing that you 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” (I Pet. 1:18-19). **It is not just the shedding of someone’s blood that saves, it is the shedding of the blood of one who is unblemished, spotless and sinless.**

According to history, Paul was decapitated and Peter was crucified, which meant both shed their blood. But their blood could not redeem anyone because both of them were sinners. However, Jesus Christ’s blood is that of an unblemished, spotless Lamb and His blood is the only blood that can purchase our redemption.

God promised the death penalty for those who sinned against Him, which has physical and eternal ramifications. In order for us to be redeemed, the penalty of death must be endured and blood must be shed. However, since our blood is the blood of a sinner, God will not accept it. We could not ever be right with a Holy God and get out of our sin state by shedding our own blood, because our shed blood is the blood of a sinner. However, there is a way we may get out of our sinful condition; it is through Christ’s shed blood.

By the way, this teaches us something very important. In order for Jesus Christ to save us, He had to die and shed His blood. He could not have saved us if He would have just died in His sleep. If He would have had a heart attack and dropped dead on top of a mountain, or if He would have died lying sick in a hospital bed, He could not have redeemed us. Our Redeemer had to shed His blood because there is no release from sin without the shedding of blood.

(Redemptive Fact #3) – Our redemption means we have forgiveness of our trespasses. 1:7c

Now the verb “we have” is present tense in Greek, which means one who has believed on Jesus Christ has continual forgiveness of sins. That word “forgiveness” (αφεσις) means that there has been a permanent cancellation or dismissal and release from any condemnation and punishment for sin, because Christ has fully paid for it.

It is interesting that Paul uses the word “trespasses” (παραπτώμα) which is much more specific than just missing the mark. This word refers to false steps and specific sin acts that we have taken against God (*Smith*, p. 342). We have all taken specific steps into the path of sin. We have all taken paths right off the righteous path of God. Jesus Christ’s blood not only paid the price for our sins, but our blatant personal sins.

One who has been redeemed has a continual forgiveness that guarantees we cannot ever experience the condemnation or wrath of God. “Jesus paid it all, all to Him I owe; sin had left a crimson stain – He washed it white as snow.”

(Redemptive Fact #4) – Our redemption is due to the riches of God’s grace. **1:7d**

Someone has said that a good acrostic for the word grace is

“God’s
Riches
At
Christ’s
Expense.”

Six times in this book of Ephesians Paul refers to God’s riches (1:7, 18; 2:4, 7; 3:8, 16). Paul wants every believer to realize he is rich.

In November, Forbes Magazine published a list of the annual incomes of the richest dead people in the world (Dorothy Pomerantz & Zack O Malley Greeburg, *Sales From the Crypt*, p. 22):

- 1) Michael Jackson dead earns 170 million dollars per year.
- 2) Elvis Presley dead earns 55 million dollars per year.
- 3) Marilyn Monroe dead earns 27 million dollars per year.
- 4) Charles Schulz dead earns 25 million dollars per year.
- 5) Elizabeth Taylor dead earns 12 million dollars per year.

Forbes magazine missed it. Believers in Jesus Christ are the wealthiest dead people. We were dead in our trespasses and our sins and God saved us and has given us all the eternal wealth of His heaven. We share in all the wealth of God. A few million dollars is nothing compared to what we have; we have all the eternal riches of the grace of God.

Notice carefully the text says “according to” the riches of His grace, not “out of” the riches of His grace. What this means is that this whole grace package was in accordance with the rich plan of God to save sinners.

Donald Grey Barnhouse illustrated this by telling a story about J.D. Rockefeller who at one time was the head of Standard Oil Company, and the richest man in the world. Apparently Mr. Rockefeller would often give out dimes to people. He would fill up his pocket with dimes and walk out on the street and give them away. That was giving “out of” his riches. This man was a multi-billionaire and a pocket full of dimes meant nothing. Now if he had gone out and started handing out big checks to everyone, that would be “according to” his riches.

God has not handed us dimes, He has given us His full wealth. The redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ is according to the rich standards of the fullness of God’s grace. Salvation is all about God’s grace.

Now the pronoun “which” that begins **verse 8** is syntactically connected to the noun “grace.” J. Armitage Robinson, who wrote a tremendous commentary on the Greek text of Ephesians back in 1903, said that this helps to define this grace in another way (*Commentary on Ephesians*, p. 30).

The word “wisdom” (σοφία) is one that means to have true perceptive insight into the nature of something. The word “insight” (φρονησις) seems to mean to have a practical understanding of something. Now both nouns are modified by the adjective “all.” The anarthrous construction (no article “the”) emphasizes the character and quality of something.

What I understand Paul to be saying is that God wants us to be very skilled in our understanding of the character and quality of grace redemption. He wants us accurately and practically grasping this precious doctrine both theologically and practically. He wants us to realize the incredible dimensions of how God can be just and justify the ungodly. Part of the package of God's grace blessings is that He permits those who have been redeemed to have all wisdom and all insight into all the precious doctrines of redemption.

God's grace has been lavished upon us in "all wisdom and insight." Now this right here tells us that grasping the grace of God will not be a simple matter of academics. The actual potential for grasping this doctrine of the grace of God is found in Christ and found in a very careful study of the Word of God.

May I ask a question? How many of us have spent more time reading the newspaper than the Bible? How many of us have spent more time watching the news rather than reading Scripture? Don't answer that, because if we did we would all be embarrassed. But here is the point. This dispensation of the grace of God is the age in which God will allow His people to grow deep in their knowledge of Him. The more we realize this, the richer we are.

IN CHRIST GRACE BLESSING #2 – We are to praise God because in Christ we know about the mystery of the grace dispensation. **1:9-10**

A mystery, biblically speaking, is not something mysterious or eerie; it is something known by God but cannot be known by humans until God decides He will let humans understand it. Apparently Paul had taught the Ephesians a great deal about biblical prophecy, because he looked into the future and told the Ephesians they should be praising God, because they know that in the future Jesus Christ will reign over everything. He will reign over everything in heaven and over everything on earth.

In the Bible there are several things God classifies as mysteries:

- 1) The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven (Mt. 13:3-50).
- 2) The mystery of Israel's blindness (Rom. 11:25).
- 3) The mystery of the Rapture of the Church (I Cor. 15:51-52; I Thess. 4:13-17).
- 4) The mystery of the N.T. Church being one body with Jews and Gentiles (Eph. 3:1-12; Rom. 16:25; Eph. 6:19; Col. 1:26-27).
- 5) The mystery of the Church being the bride of Christ (Eph. 5:23-32).
- 6) The mystery of the indwelling Christ (Gal. 2:20; Col. 1:26-27).
- 7) The mystery of God Himself, Jesus Christ (I Cor. 2:7; Col. 2:2, 9).
- 8) The mystery of the processes in restoring godliness to sinful man (I Tim. 3:16).
- 9) The mystery of the outworking of iniquity (II Thess. 2:7).
- 10) The mystery of the seven stars (Rev. 1:20).
- 11) The mystery of Babylon (Rev. 17:5, 7).
- 12) The mystery of dispensationalism (Eph. 1:9-10).

Now what God has done is made known to us "an administration" that is suitable "of the fullness of times." The word "administration" (οικονομία) is one that refers to a stewardship, an administration, or a dispensation (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 313). Dispensationalism is a mystery that has been revealed by God to us.

Now we may understand dispensationalism by our own political process. Every four to eight years we see a new administration that occurs in a specific period of time or dispensation. Within the history of the United States there are various administrations and dispensations that form the history. Within the program of God there are various administrations and dispensational times that form the program of God for all history.

As I understand it, Paul is saying that we are to praise God, because God, according to His kind will has permitted us to understand the Grace Age and how it fits together in the fullness of times. In other words, this Church Age is the age that understands or should understand the dispensational program of God because God has chosen to make this known to us.

We are to praise God because God has revealed to us His eschatological plan and we know where all of history is headed. We are presently living in the dispensation of the Grace of God. Now this amazing grace dispensation was a mystery not known during the days of the O.T. Law. God's grace existed in the O.T. in many places, but an actual dispensation that featured grace was not known.

But because of the will of God, because of His kind intention, God purposed that a grace dispensation would exist fully consistent with His "fullness of times" program that will lead to Jesus Christ being the sum of everything in heaven and on earth.

So we can praise God because we know that we will be raptured, and that will lead to the Tribulation, and that will lead to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, and that will lead to His Kingdom, and that will lead to the Great White Throne Judgment which will lead to Him taking over the entire universe forever. We can praise God because God has revealed all of these eschatological things to us.

By the way, if people in the Grace Age do not understand biblical prophecy or dispensationalism, they are short-changing their worship. They should be praising God for all He has revealed.

IN CHRIST GRACE BLESSING #3 – We are to praise God because in Christ we have an inheritance . **1:11-12**

We have been predestined for an eternal inheritance in and with Christ. We are God's inheritance. As Paul said in Romans, we are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ."

You may say, well I am a pretty poor example of being an inheritance of God, but you need to know that God does not see you as you presently are; He sees you in Christ and He sees what you will be.

Now you think this through for a moment. God in His sovereignty saved you and God in His sovereignty had a plan in which His own Son would pay the price to give you the entire grace package, which included you sharing in the eternal inheritance of His Son when He rules the world.

Now if that does not prompt you to bow your head and thank and praise God for all He and His Son have done, I do not know what will.