

## The Presence of Glory - Ephesians 1:3-10

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### Introduction

Twice in my life I have been far away from United States. I went halfway around the world and stayed for six weeks each time. Both times I really wanted to go and thoroughly enjoyed my time away. However, the closer it got to being “time to go home” the more I missed home and was anxious to get back. It’s an interesting thing to leave your home and travel in a foreign land. When you get to your destination, and possibly on the stops in between, you are treated like a foreigner. You’re not surprised by this, but it can take you a bit off guard. When you arrive, by plane at least, in a foreign land. you get to stand in the line that may as well have a sign over it that states, “You do not belong here”. Then you get to show your passport to the most unfriendly, and likely the first national, you meet. They stare you up and down as if you don’t belong there. Begrudgingly, they allow you in. You are keenly aware, this is not home.

While you are away from home you don’t lose your citizenship. In fact, there are little outposts of your country all over the world. I went to Australia, and like many other countries, the United States has an embassy there in a place called Canberra. If I were to have an emergency, like losing my passport before departure, becoming seriously ill, or worse, if I were to die in that foreign land, the people at my embassy would help get me home. You see there are privileges to being a citizen of the United States that stay with you while you are away.

But the best part by far of being away, is coming home. You see when you arrive back home you get to skip the “you do not belong here” line. You get to pass under the banner of home and for some reason, that banner, that flag, never looks as pretty as it does after you have been gone a while. And then this happens. You walk past all of the people who “do not belong here” and just before you get to the part of the airport where the foreigners and the citizens mix back together there is a person standing there with a big smile and only one job as far as I could tell. She was there to say, “Welcome home” to all of the citizens as they passed by. It’s enough to make you break out singing the National Anthem.

Today we are going to talk about some of the blessings of your Heavenly citizenship. We are going to talk about the presence of Glory right here on earth. No, we’re not home just yet, but there are outpost of our home all over the world called Churches. Believers are bound together in those Churches all over this foreign land are to live out the reality that they are citizens of Heaven, already experiencing some of the blessings of home, but not all just yet.

Pray

Paul starts out our time this morning by showing us the overall blessing of being a citizen of Heaven. Look down at Ephesians chapter one, verse three. This is what God’s word says,

**Blessing vv. 3-4**

*<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, <sup>4</sup>even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him.*

Think of the beginning of this verse like this, “Worthy is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ”. Paul wants us to understand that what is to follow is all because God is great, glorious and good! There is only one who deserves honor and praise and that is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because, in Christ - remember that statement because we are going to hear things like it all along - In Christ we have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly places. If heaven is a storehouse, big as the sky above, and in that storehouse there are all the spiritual blessings that ever where, they would all be poured out on every believer. You do not live in Heaven as of yet, but every possible blessing of Heaven is available to you because you are in Christ. Don't tell me you can't love your spouse. Don't tell me you can't stop being angry. Don't tell me your particular sin is not overcomeable. You have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Either your sin is overcomeable or God doesn't have enough blessing in heaven for you to kick that idol of it's pedestal. Now you tell me what's true. It may not be easy, but it's that simple.

Paul goes on. “even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world”. God is worthy of blessing, and we know that because he has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing and he had made us his chosen people in him - did you hear that - in him, before the earth was ever made. Have you ever felt like things were out of control? Have you ever felt like your sin was a little too terrible for God to forgive? Have you ever thought God might just need a little help from you in saving this person or that one? This verse should end all of those questions for you. And further, if you are having a horrible day, month, life you should look back down at that verse and know that God knew you and chose you anyhow before he even began work on the world you now live in. He is a sovereign -totally in control, omniscient - all knowing, omnipresent - everywhere present God who doesn't need your help or good works to save you and make you a citizen of heaven. He doesn't need you, but praise God he wants you. He picked you! Why? Because of the rest of the verse, “that we should be holy and blameless before him”. All of this blessing and choosing is so that he will have a holy and blameless people for himself.

In Christ you have all of heaven's blessings. In him, you were chosen before the foundations of the world. And all of it is so that you will be his holy and blameless people. No excuses, go forth and live like a people blessed beyond measure.

You already have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, but not yet...

Paul move on here to fill out the picture of what these heavenly blessings look like. The next six verses will cover the past, present and future blessings of all who claim the name of Christ. First we will look back to the past. Look with me at vv. 5-6, this is what God's word says,

**Adoption vv. 5-6**

*In love <sup>5</sup> he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.*

The blessing Paul points to in the past is adoption. He says you were “predestined” for “adoption”. The two words for our purposes are nearly redundant - for what adopted child had anything to do with his adoption? But God says that is was predestined. It was determined long before the world knew you, or you knew the world. And as if to really drive his point home God says it was, “according to the purpose of his will”. Do you get that? He’s told you three times that you had nothing to do with your salvation and that to the praise of his glorious grace. God wants and deserves the praise from the people he is gathering together and he will not accept anyone else leaning in on what is his. How dare us take credit for his work. He will not allow it and we should never seek to steal his glory.

But let’s go back to that little phrase, “adoption as sons through Jesus Christ”. Now certainly there is blessing as an adopted son in the next life. Surely there is. However I want to take you back to an Old Testament passage that brings some of the earthly blessings of adoption to light as well. Don’t turn here, allow me to read to you a portion of Scripture from 2 Samuel. The scene is this, King David’s best friend Jonathan has died and David has taken Sauls place as the rightful King so he asks one of Sauls old servants named Ziba if anyone of Jonathan’s house is still alive. Ziba tells him that yes, yes there is Jonathan’s boy Mephibosheth. vv 6-8 go like this, “And Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, son of Saul, came to David and fell on his face and paid homage. And David said, “Mephibosheth!” And he answered, “Behold, I am your servant.” 7 And David said to him, “Do not fear, for I will show you kindness for the sake of your father Jonathan, and I will restore to you all the land of Saul your father, and you shall eat at my table always.” 8 And he paid homage and said, “What is your servant, that you should show regard for a dead dog such as I?” v. 11 goes on to say, “So Mephibosheth ate at David’s table, like one of the king’s sons.” and v 13 finishes off the passage in this way, “So Mephibosheth lived in Jerusalem, for he ate always at the king’s table. Now he was lame in both his feet.” God mentions elsewhere in the passage that Mephibosheth is lame. He seems to be hammering home the helplessness of Mephibosheth. Do you see the picture? Can you hear the echos of God’s future story and your salvation in the story of Mephibosheth. You had no power to gain the King’s favor. He went looking for you. You had no right to sit at the King’s table (think The Lord’s Supper), but now you are invited. You like Mephibosheth has no access to sonship, but The King has adopted you and invited you to his table “to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the beloved.

You have already been adopted into the Kings family, but not yet...

Let’s move on to the present age. We live in what one author calls “The Proclaimed Kingdom”. Look down at vv 7-8 to see what blessing we can behold in the present. This is what God’s word says,

### **Redemption vv.7-8a**

*<sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us,*

Once again, please notice who these blessings are for. They are for those that are “In him”. Are you seeing a pattern? Good! Notice as well that our current blessing is redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ, the forgiveness of our trespasses. Just stop and think about that for a moment. You, who were once a slave to sin “having no hope and without God in the world”. But you, you have been redeemed. You have been purchased. You had sold yourself into slavery without hope of ever buying yourself back. How were you redeemed? “Through [Jesus’] blood! He went to the cross and suffered the wrath of God on your behalf. That suffering, that punishment, that forsaking of the Son of God is how Jesus bought you back from hell itself. His blood paid the ransom for your soul. All the blood of the millions of animal sacrifices over thousands of years could not do what the blood of Jesus did on that cross. He purchased you by his blood and not only that...your sin, or trespasses, have been forgiven. You know longer have to feel guilt. You no longer have to worry about your future. You have already conquered the slavery of sin and will be set free from it in the future These are great blessings.

Now that we see what he has accomplished, lets see by what means it was accomplished. Of course all of this was accomplished through the cross of Christ, but here in our text is says it was, “according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight”. It is by the riches of God’s grace that we have been redeemed. God has poured out, or lavished upon us, his grace. Look at the kind of God you are serving. This is not a God you have to beg and plead with for every blessing. God sits in heaven and dumps out blessing upon you. Paul specifically uses that word, “lavishes” which gives the sense of over-abundance, more than what is needed. God is not sprinkling blessing on your head, he has released a torrent of blessing upon you.

You have already been redeemed by the blood of Christ, but not yet...

We have seen God’s blessing of adoption from the past. We have seen his blessing of redemption that we now see taking place in our present time and next we will see what he has in store for us in the future.

Look down with me at vv 9-10. This is what God’s word says,

#### **Culmination vv. 8b-10**

*in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

So how did God lavish the riches of his grace upon us? “in all wisdom and insight”. When he lavished the riches of his grace upon us in all wisdom and insight, what did he make known to us? “the mystery of his will”. And why did he make this mystery known to us, because he purposed to do so. This was the plan all along. God was intending from the beginning to make this mystery of his will known to us. Bless God brothers and sisters for He has made known to us the very mystery “into which angels long to look”.

I hope you are sitting there on the edge of your seat thinking WHAT!? What is the mystery? Look down again at the end of verse nine, the mystery, the too glorious for us to speak of truth is that which “he set forth in Christ”! The mystery is the death, burial, resurrection and glorification of Jesus Christ! It is his work on the cross that is the great mystery. Read your Old Testament, what seems plan to us in hindsight was not so plan to those there in the flesh, but God has made it known to us, and what a blessing that is! Of course we know that our believing friends in the Old Testament were saved by faith just like we are, but they did not have the rich understanding of the cross that we do on our side of that cross.

Paul goes on in verse ten to tell us what kind of plan this is. This is a plan for the fullness of time. Meaning when time has run it’s course and it’s the exact right moment for Christ to appear, he will. And we also get a sense that this “fullness of time” is when time stops. When this age is over and the new heavens and the new earth are brought on scene. I say that because look what else Paul says about this fullness of time. He says at that time all things will be united in Christ, things in heaven and things on earth. Nothing will escape this unifying. Our glorious King will bring it all together under his leadership and rule. Not one jot or tittle will be left unmarked when Christ is given all things to be unified in him.

This will be the grand and glorious end of all that God has sought to establish in time. He will bring it all together in Christ and the Kingdom of God will finally and forever be established. The people of God will finally and forever be safe with their God and the Devil and his minions will be put out and to shame once and for all.

You have been shown the mystery of his will in Christ, but not yet...

All of these things are yours. You have been adopted by the King! You have been redeemed! You have been shown the mystery of his will in Christ! Why? Why? Because you have gone from death to life. You have been made new. God has made you a citizen of heaven and with that comes all the blessing and privilege therein. Praise God church for his loving kindness upon those who deserved nothing and were incapable of earning anything. You are already a citizen of heaven!

But we are not yet home. For now, you and I travel in a foreign land. You and I stand in the “you do not belong here” line. We walk through this world and rely on God and his people in there little outposts to get through our time away. Someday though, we will step out of the “you do not belong here” line and we will walk under the banner of home and we will hear the very voice of God say, “Welcome Home” and that day the “not yet” blessings of Heaven will be our already.

### **Reflect and Respond**

You have been adopted -

You have been redeemed -

You are part of God’s plan -