

# Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians

**SIT  
WALK  
STAND**

## WEEK TWO – SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

### Read Ephesians 1

In Study One we looked at the theme of Redemption in this chapter, but there is more we can learn about the blessings and wisdom made available to us through Jesus. One writer says that Ephesians deals with the topics at the very core of what it means to be a Christian, both in faith and in practice.

### Read verses 3-14

*“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ.” (verse 3)*

*According to the Key-Word Study Bible, “The Greek word translated blessed in this passage is makarioi which means to be fully satisfied. It refers to those receiving God’s favour, regardless of the circumstances”.*

*What is blessing, then? Scripture shows that blessing is anything God gives that makes us fully satisfied in him. Anything that draws us closer to Jesus. Anything that helps us relinquish the temporal and hold on more tightly to the eternal. And often it is the struggles and trials, the aching disappointments and the unfulfilled longings that best enable us to do that.”*

We need to read this a few times to enable us to take in the enormous truth of what it is to be blessed by God.

- What examples can you think of, in your life, where you have experienced God’s blessings?
- Do you agree that it is often the hard times that produce the greatest blessings?

Verse 4 tells us that even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. I’ve often said that when God looks at us, he looks through the filter of Jesus who has dealt with our sins and so God sees us as holy.

Can you think back to when you were in school and you were chosen to do something, how you stood a little taller, feeling very proud to be singled out in this way? Often, in the 9:30 service on Sunday mornings, we see this in children who are asked to show us

what they have made in relation to the theme of the service. It's so lovely to see their faces! Instead of thinking we are not worthy to be chosen, believe that God loved us so much he wants everyone to know we are special. John 15:16 says: *"You have not chosen me, but I have chosen you."*

- We are very adept at putting ourselves down but try looking at ourselves as God sees us.

God has blessed us by adopting us into his family, says verse 5. It also says that this is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure! We probably know of families who have adopted children and how they reassure the child of their love because they specifically chose them. Remember that song we sometimes sing:

**Father God, I wonder how I managed to exist**

Without the knowledge of Your parenthood and Your loving care  
Now I am Your son, I am adopted in Your family, and I can never be alone  
'Cause Father God, You're there beside me.

**I will sing Your praises...**

- Pray that we will always try and keep this truth at the forefront of our minds.

God has accepted us and, as we discussed last week, he has redeemed us. Therefore, we can boldly enter heaven's Most Holy Place because of the blood of Jesus (Hebrews 10:19).

One of the greatest blessings, in my mind, is that of forgiveness. For some people, guilt is a terrible problem. It can destroy their life and the lives of others. We cannot, of course, change the past, but Jesus wipes the slate totally clean! Psalm 103:8-12 (NLT), says: *"The Lord is merciful and gracious; he is slow to get angry and full of unfailing love. He will not constantly accuse us, nor remain angry forever. He has not punished us for all our sins, nor does he deal with us as we deserve. For his unfailing love towards those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our rebellious acts as far away from us as the east is from the west."*

There is no way of measuring that distance!

*"If we really want to love, we must learn how to forgive."* – Mother Teresa

- Do we come anywhere near to realising the depth of God's love for us?

How deep the Father's love for us  
How vast beyond all measure  
That He should give His only Son  
To make a wretch His treasure  
How great the pain of searing loss  
The Father turns His face away  
As wounds which mar the Chosen One  
Bring many sons to glory (*Stuart Townend*)

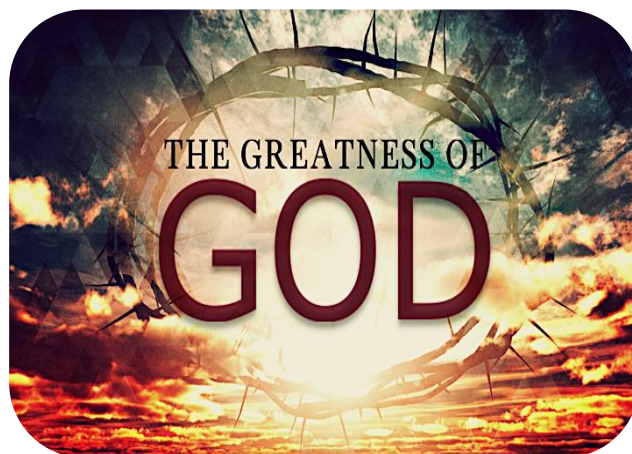
- Are there people whom you find difficult to forgive, perhaps because of the hurt they have caused? Why not ask another Christian to pray with you about this. The act of acknowledging your problem can help open your heart to forgiveness.
- Don't feel ashamed that you find forgiveness difficult. Do it anyway!
- In verse 18 Paul prays that the heart of the Ephesian Christians will be flooded with light so that they can understand the confident hope God has given to those he called - us, his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance!

It's one thing to appreciate that we have an inheritance from God, but here Paul is saying, **WE** are **HIS** inheritance. In our world, people are always excited if they know they have an inheritance coming to them following the death of a family member. How much will be it? What will we spend it on? It's hard to look at ourselves and think that God is excited about us being his inheritance, as individuals, and as part of the Body of Christ, the Church!

We talked in the last study about how we belong to God because he has made the down payment to guarantee his ownership and protection of each one of us.

The final verse of the chapter tells us that the church is his body, it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself!

We sometimes sing the hymn: *Tell out my soul, the greatness of the Lord*. Having read of all the blessings God has promised to us as believers, we should sing that with great gusto.



**Prayer**

**Father God, always help us to acknowledge your greatness and the wonderful blessings that you have given us.**

**Amen**