

Light From Ephesians- God Picked You

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I. Introduction

A. We are going to start a series from Ephesians- We are not going to cover every verse. We will skip along the book getting glimpses of its light.

B. Paul wrote Ephesians while in house arrest in Rome. **(Acts 28:16)** It was a circular letter to be shared among churches.

C. The book is broken up into two equal parts. The first three chapters are Paul's teaching about **who we are and what we have** because we are in Christ. The second part is practical exhortations to put into practice and act upon these truths in Christ. This section tells us **what we can do** because we are in Christ. Ephesians chapters 1-3 are portraits of the new creation in Christ. We have been seated with Christ. The first part of Ephesians gives you pictures of who you are and what you have in Christ. It is pictures of us seated with Christ. They are still photos of the new Creation! Ephesians 4-6 is action photos of the new creation at home, in marriage, at work, and living out among this fallen world. These are pictures of what the new creation looks like when it arises and does the will of God in the strength and grace of God!

D. In the first half of the book of Ephesians we see what the Trinity has provided for His people. Chapter 1 reveals the Father's plan of redemption. Chapter 2 reveals the Son's execution of redemption on the cross and resurrection. Chapter 3 reveals the Holy Spirit's role in revealing redemption to us.

E. The key term in the book of Ephesians is "In Him" and similar terms. Just in the first chapter alone it is repeated 9 times in 13 verses! God repeats this over and over because we need to never forget that ALL God's blessings of grace are attached the person of Jesus Christ and His perfect obedience on the cross. God's blessings are forever tied to obedience but

what kind of obedience? PERFECT OBEDIENCE. Our best obedience is but partial and cannot deserve the blessings of God. The Law proved that to man! It was Christ's perfect obedience and sacrifice for us that gave us righteousness and all blessings of God flows from that righteousness.

(Romans 5:19)

F. You might be wondering why I focus so much on Christ and His finished work. It is because God does! He has forever married the two. Sadly the universal church as largely divorced God's blessings from Christ and His finished work and based them on our performance and imperfect obedience! What God has joined together, I refuse to put asunder!

II. The Resources for a God honoring life!

A. Many try to perform the last section of this book in order to arrive to the position that God tells us He placed us by His grace in the first part of the book. They try to arrive in the end to the place where God has placed us freely by His grace at the start! The beginning of a grace focused believer will always be far ahead of the most sincere law focused believer. The church in grace started far ahead of where Israel after a thousand years ended up when Jesus came. **(Romans 11:7)**

B. **Ephesians 1:2**- grace and peace- This phrase is mentioned sixteen times at the beginning of the epistles in the NT. When God repeats something it is because of its great importance. This is the most repeated phrase in the epistles! This shows us that our Christian life MUST begin with God's grace. God's grace is what God has done and given to us freely outside of our merit, performance, or lack of performance! God's grace will never fluctuate because it is not determined by our performance or failures in it. It is based upon the God who never changes! This brings us peace. We have peace with God through His grace. We can have peace of heart when we understand the grace of God. Peace reigns through grace alone through faith alone.

C. Notice grace is bestowed and conferred upon us before anything is asked of us which begins in chapter 4:1

D. Grace is not just unmerited favor. This favor is actual resources given to us in order to live a God honoring life! God's gifts are what enable us to live the way we should.

E. **Ephesians 1:3**-This grace is manifested to us by the blessings of God. All the blessings of God to the Christian are based upon His grace. We have BEEN blessed with EVERY spiritual blessing in Heavenly places in Christ. The word blessing is the Greek word eulogia. We get the word eulogy. This word means literally eu-good logos- word. It means to speak good words over someone. At a funeral people will speak good things about the person who died. When Jesus died, God the Father stood and spoke good things about the people Jesus died for. He spoke good words that if believed would change our lives from the inside out! All natural blessings find their sources in the spiritual heavenly realms in Christ. This includes finances. **(Phil 4:19)** He meets ALL our needs according His riches in GLORY. **All the blessings of God have been given to us in Christ already. They were given to us before we were even born in order that we would not try to merit them by our performance! Notice again that they are conferred to us before any thing is asked of us in way of our performance. This shows us they are of grace and not of our merit or performance.**

F. We are going to look now at some of these blessings of God that will empower us to a God honoring life. We must renew our mind to who we are and what we have in Christ. We can't look at our natural condition to see if they are true of us. These are to be accepted by faith. This comes by revelation and released by words and actions. We must have our hearts beliefs change before our actions and lifestyle will come in line with God's word. Our heart is the seat of our self. When the Word impacts us at a heart level then we will see ourselves as God says we are. We live according to what we believe about God and ourselves in our heart.

G. The first grace blessing we see is that we have been **chosen** by God. **Ephesians 1:4** This means God picked us to be His children. Before you picked Jesus as your Savior, God picked you! You were picked by God to be His child before the foundation of the world. God saw you getting saved from eternity past and picked you as His child in Christ. The door of salvation from man's side says over it, All may come! Once you walk through the door from God's side over the door is written is "chosen from the foundation of the world!"

1. When I was a kid we often played games at recess. We lined up against the fence and we were picked to be on teams. I remember sometimes not being picked. It has stunted me to this day! That is why my eye twitches! When I was chosen I felt accepted.
2. God by choosing us He confers His acceptance upon us. It confers value to us.
3. This is the first blessing of grace. We are accepted by God freely outside of our merit. He does not just accept us as the old sinners we used to be! He accepts us in Christ as new creatures! God sees you totally different than you do. He does not see your past outside of Christ. He saw the old you die when Jesus died as your representative. He sees you as His child! In Christ God has forever accepted you by His grace. He has given you His own righteousness. You need to say that. You need to say, I have been hand chosen by the God of the Universe. You need to say, I am fully accepted and acceptable in Jesus Christ! I am just as I ought to be in Christ. Believing this will impact your daily life!
4. The biggest problem among believers is that they do not know or believe they are accepted by God freely by His grace outside of their performance. If we try to become accepted by God and others outside of receiving the gift of the righteousness of Christ then we will be really insecure. It leads to envy, jealousy, anger, depression, competition, and addictions.

H. The grace of God and blessings of God again are the resources that we live our life from. The grace of God is the root that we bear the fruit of holy living. In this study when we look at a grace blessing of God we will look at how that blessing empowers us to live out what the second part of Ephesians.

I. When you read a verse that tells you to do something in the NT then you need to also look for the resource given to you to fulfill it. You will find it in the same book! **Ephesians 4:1-3**- This is a call to live worthy of our calling. The word worthy is the Greek word axios. This word means to balance. This means we are to have our lifestyle balance what God says of us. He says we are His chosen child of God. Our life should be in balance with the fact that we are chosen and accepted by God. How does the fact that we are chosen and accepted by God impact our daily life? It will empower us to fulfill what God desires of us in Ephesians 4:2-3. When we know we are accepted by God freely then it will cause us to be humble. Proud people are insecure and trying to get acceptance. When you know you are accepted freely by God you will be gentle with others mistakes. When we are trying to be accepted then we will pick out others faults to make ourselves look and feel better. When we know we are freely accepted by God then we will be patient with people. Insecure people are very impatient with the failings of others. When we know we are freely accepted by God we will seek for unity and peace with others believers because we know they also are freely accepted by God. This brings peace to a group of believers. It brings security. It releases the anointing of God! (**Ps. 133:2**)

III. Conclusion

- A. We have been chosen by God. This means he has accepted you. He accepted you freely outside of our actions and performance.
- B. Meditate on this verse in Ephesians 1:4. In connection with meditating this verse this week also meditate on Ephesians 4:1-3.

C. When you are tempted during the week to be proud, harsh, and impatient with others verbally acknowledge out loud that you are chosen and accepted by God freely. Since God does not change His opinion of you when blow it will empower you to look at others in grace also.

D. Pray