

REASONS TO PRAISE GOD

Ephesians 1:1-14

4/11/10

Praise and thanksgiving do not come naturally to most of us.

Most of us are more prone to be murmurers, gripers, and complainers.

The children of Israel complained in the wilderness about their circumstances and about Moses' leadership.

Some Jews grumbled and found fault during the time of the building of the second temple.

Ezra 3:12-13 cf Haggai and Zechariah

Philippians 2:14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing

Ephesians 5:20 always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father

Our passage this morning in Ephesians gives us several reasons we should give thanks to God.

1. The Background Of Ephesians 1:1-2

Ephesians was written by the apostle Paul around 61 A.D. while he was imprisoned in Rome

It was written to Christians in western Turkey around the city of Ephesus.

The leading city in the Roman province of Asia

Population estimated to be between 200,000 and 500,000 people in the first century

Port and trade center on both the E-W and N-S trade routes

It was famous for its temple to Artemis (Diana) which was one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

The church at Ephesus was probably started by Aquila and Priscilla.

The Apostle Paul visited there on his second missionary journey and later ministered there for about 3 years.

Besides Paul some of the pastors of the church included Apollos, Timothy, and the apostle John.

The church in Ephesus became the center for missionary outreach to all of Turkey and southern Europe

Tradition tells us that Jesus' mother Mary settled there.

In 263 AD Ephesus was ransacked by the Goths

Its port silted in during the fourth century and today the city is only a ruins.

1a The Author

Paul- an *apostle* of Christ Jesus

by the will of God

1b-2 The Recipients

1b To the saints who are at Ephesus

Saints- Not some special category of Christian

All who have come to Christ have been forgiven and made clean from sin and are called saints in the New Testament

Who are faithful in Christ Jesus

They had faith in Christ and were faithful to Him with their lives

1:2 They were recipients of God's grace and peace

Grace from God- God's gifts

Peace from God- No longer subject to God's judgment

2. Our Blessings From God 1:3-14

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ

To bless means to speak well of someone or to do good for someone

God is worthy of our thanksgiving and praise.

He is worthy of our lives because . . .

a. God has blessed us. v. 3

With every spiritual blessing

1 Corinthians 2:9 . . . "THINGS WHICH EYE HAS NOT SEEN AND EAR HAS NOT HEARD, AND *which* HAVE NOT ENTERED THE HEART OF MAN, ALL THAT GOD HAS PREPARED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM."

Spiritual blessings- Not necessarily material blessings

Many of these will be explained in chapters 1-3

In the heavenlies

Secured for us with God in heaven

In Christ

In order to receive the blessings we must be united to Christ by faith

This phrase or its equivalent is found 10 times in verses 3-13

b. God has chosen us. v. 4

He chose us

What does God choose us for?

2 Thessalonians 2:13 . . . God has chosen you from the beginning for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and faith in the truth.

God offers salvation to all

But because of sin and rebellion none of us will respond on our own

Therefore God has chosen to work in a special way to draw some to Himself

Those who don't come to Christ will be held responsible for their sin and rebellion against God.

Those who come to Christ are examples of the grace and mercy of God

The Bible never teaches that God chooses some people to go to hell.

God never condemns people who deserve to be saved.

(There are none)

But He does save some who ought to be condemned.

(If left alone all would be lost.)

Anyone can be saved by repenting of his sins and believing on the Lord Jesus Christ.

John 3:16

John 6:40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."

In Him (Christ)

Before the foundation of the world

Prior to creation

Before you ever existed you were present in the mind of God

That we should be holy and blameless before Him

Free from your sin

Not subject to judgment

c. God has predestined us vv. 5-6

Predestined

Marked out beforehand

In love

To the adoption as sons

Through Jesus Christ

To Himself

According to the kind intention of His will

To the praise of the glory of His grace

Which He freely bestowed on us

In the Beloved

d. We have redemption through His blood v. 7-8

Through His death Christ paid the price to free us from slavery to sin and guilt

The forgiveness of our trespasses

According to the riches of His grace

Which He lavished upon us

e. He made known to us the mystery of His will vv. 9-10

According to His kind intention

Which He purposed in Him

With a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times

The summing up of all things in Christ

Things in the heavens

Things on the earth

God plan is to make Christ the focus and center of His whole creation.

f. We have obtained an inheritance vv. 11-12

1 Peter 1:3-4 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, ⁴ to *obtain* an inheritance *which is* imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,

Having been predestined according to His purpose

Who works all things after the counsel of His will

That we . . . should be to the praise of His glory

g. You are sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise vv. 13-14 cf 4:30

After listening to the message of truth

The gospel of your salvation

Having also believed. Cf 2:8-9

The Holy Spirit was given as a pledge of our inheritance

With a view to the redemption of God's own possessions

To the praise of His glory

Things To Think About

1. True riches come from God.

Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places

Chosen

Predestined

Redeemed through His blood- the forgiveness of our sins

Adopted as children of God to Himself

Enlightened to the mystery of His will

Given a heavenly inheritance

He sealed us in Christ by the Holy Spirit

2. All these riches come to us by God's grace.

4 In love

5 According to the kind intention of His will

7 According to the riches of His grace

9 According to His kind intention

3. We should respond with praise to His glory. Cf vv. 6, 12, 14

4. These riches are only the beginning.

5. It is important to be certain that I am "in Christ."

All of these blessing are only found "in Christ."

This phrase or its equivalent is used 10 times in our passage this morning.

Are you "in Christ?"

John 3:16

John 6:40 "For this is the will of My Father, that everyone who beholds the Son and believes in Him will have eternal life, and I Myself will raise him up on the last day."