



Introduction to Ephesians 1:3-6

Sunday, September 17, 2017
Pastor Don Denyes

Growing up, we're often told to "count our blessings." The blessings to which that statement refers typically include physical blessings—family, friends, provision for physical needs, etc. Those are certainly good things and things for which we should be grateful to God. But as we think about Christianity, we ought to continue to count our spiritual blessings most of all. Granted, this is more difficult to do as we cannot touch, see, taste, or smell our spiritual blessings. But thankfully, the Apostle Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, has given us a helpful list so that we can at least read about and hear our spiritual blessings.

The blessings listed in Ephesians 1 run the gamut from before the foundation of the world (v. 4) all the way to the end, when God unites all things together in Christ (v. 10). Therefore, everything we can think of that happens in day-to-day life, happens within the spectrum of God's blessings towards us in Christ. Every day that we live is situated somewhere between God initiating His plan to save us and bringing that plan to completion. Nothing that happens in your life, then, happens out of order. It is all under God's watchful hand to bring about the praise of His glorious grace (v. 6).

Context

As Pastor Don noted, the entire section of 1:3-14 is actually a single sentence in the original text. Scholars have tried for years to figure out how it is organized within itself to no avail. It appears to be simply rapturous praise. What is important to note with clarity, however, is that this sentence sets up what is to follow. It is essentially a thesis sentence that will be explained and have implications drawn out throughout the rest of the letter. This sentence is the most important sentence in Ephesians, and perhaps all of Scripture.

Read and Reflect *(Use this section to write down any thoughts you had on the sermon. Make sure to note any questions you had about something in the passage or in the sermon.)*

“Every Spiritual Blessing”

Read Ephesians 1:3-6

Ephesians

- 1.3 You are rich! *Every Spiritual Blessing*
- Nature of the blessing
- Scope of the blessing
- Place of the blessing
- Purpose of the blessing

Trinity Structure

- Father *planning*
- Son *performing*
- Spirit *applying*

Some of the Blessings

- Election
- Adoption
- Acceptance

Discuss

- 1) In your experience, is Christianity often associated with spiritual riches? Why or why not is that the case, do you think?

- 2) Read Ephesians 1 again. This time read the whole chapter (verses 1-23). Have someone in the group write down every blessing that is listed in the chapter. How does thinking through that list motivate you to be more deeply devoted to Jesus?

- 3) What has been your experience with the doctrine of election? How have people spoken about it in the past?

- 4) How should the doctrine of election encourage us as Christians?

- 5) Pastor Don mentioned that the aim of this passage as a whole is to result in praising God's glorious grace in Christ (v. 6, 12, 14). He suggested three main ways we can do that in day-to-day life: godliness, gratitude, and humility. Would you say you are characterized by those things? How do you know?