

Let us read Ephesians 1:1-14

It is of paramount importance to recognize that the whole context of the first part of Ephesians relates to those that are/or will be/ IN CHRIST. In other words those that have come to saving faith in Jesus Christ and those that have made Him Lord of their lives.

So when v3 talks about 'every spiritual blessing' it is talking about them being found "IN CHRIST" These heavenly blessings are not found in earthly treasures. They are found in Christ and only available to those that are in Christ (believers).

The first of these Spiritual Blessings that we find IN CHRIST is in verse 4.

When verse 4 talks about election (Choosing), we are chosen by God "IN CHRIST". In other words, those that are believers and those that will become believers are those that are "IN CHRIST" and therefore because they are IN CHRIST they are chosen (the elect).

It is important to note that the text doesn't say "just as He chose us TO BE IN HIM". It doesn't say that God chooses those that are in Him and those that are therefore not in Him. It says He chose us in Him. We are chosen because by our free will's we have responded to the grace call and the grace gift and placed our faith in the saving name and nature of Christ. At that point God put us in Christ and we became the chosen and predestined.

We are chosen to be IN CHRIST, Holy and Blameless in love.

Let me give you an example:

WATCH VIDEO CLIP of Toy Story

On Friday I decided that when I preached this message today I would play a short clip from Toy Story for those that attended.

Using your free will you chose (Some at the last moment) to attend this meeting. At the end of the Toy story clip let's say one of you raises your hand and asks, "Tino, when did you decide that we'd have to watch that movie clip," to which I might respond, "Well, I decided that 2 days ago." You then turn around and say, quite accurately, to the whole group, "Tino predestined us to watch this movie clip 2 days ago."

But notice, I didn't predestine that you individually would watch this movie clip. What I predestined is that whoever showed up at this meeting would watch this movie clip. Now that you decided (even if it was at the last minute!) to be part of this meeting, what was predestined for the whole becomes predestined for you. You are part of the "us" who were predestined to watch the clip.

So too, from the foundation of the world God predestined that whoever is in Christ would become holy and blameless in his sight as adopted Sons. But he didn't predestine certain individuals — as opposed to other unfortunate individuals — to be in Christ. This is left up to our choice. Now that you've chosen to be in Christ, what was predestined for the group becomes predestined for you. You, with Paul, can say "In Christ WE (who have chosen to believe) were predestined to be holy and blameless..."

I'm convinced this is what Paul is communicating in this passage because the whole epistle was not written to unbelievers but to believers (those that had already chosen to believe and therefore those that had been placed IN CHRIST). The text was NOT referring to an election or predestination to eternal life or eternal torment.

So what else do we find as spiritual blessings in Christ?

- Chosen by God to be holy and blameless in love
- Predestined for adoption as sons (which was the good pleasure of His will)
- Accepted by Grace in the beloved (Christ)
- Redeemed and forgiven according to the riches of His grace which abound towards us
- Made us to know the mystery of His will which is that He has gathered and is gathering all things unto Himself in Christ (and all things are still being gathered!)
- given an inheritance that is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit's seal
- and Become an inheritance for Christ Himself

He then goes on to pray that we (the believing church) would:

- be given the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him
- have the eyes of our hearts opened to understand the Hope of His calling
- The riches of the glory of His inheritance found in the saints
- The exceeding greatness of His power towards us who believe

And then ends with praise around the awesome place Christ has now as the one seated far above all things and how He is the head of all things to the church in which His fullness resides.

If we could receive this as truth v13, (not just mental ascent to a paragraph of writing) it would genuinely transform our lives.

- It would change our self-esteem and spiritual identity.
 - We would recognise that we not worthless and No longer would we be worried about whether we are accepted by man (since God accepts us)
 - We would recognise our sonship in Christ as adopted children with the Heavenly Father as our 'Abba'
- It would change our posture: (Stop grovelling)
 - We would no longer be obsessed with sin recognising that in the riches of His unmerited unearnable grace forgiveness abounds toward those in Christ for all time.
- It would demonstrate God's will and heart to redeem
 - Not just you, not just me, but all mankind and all creation which He will gather unto Himself in Christ and fully redeem it all!!!!
- It would settle our hearts
 - Because we have an inheritance and we are an inheritance
 - And the Holy Spirit is the guarantee of that inheritance
- It would give you hope that you can understand these great truths and if you can't then it gives you a model prayer by which you can receive understanding
- It would enable you to realise that you are not powerless. The power of God isn't "Out there somewhere" but in YOU somewhere and not only is it powerful it is:

- Exceedingly great and abundant
- And the same power that God demonstrated when He raised Christ from the dead and defeated the principalities and powers and inaugurated a new King, a new way of living (Kingdom) and a new covenant!
- It would give you hope God's wisdom, God's plan and the return of Christ.

At to give the whole thing its crescendo. The whole apex of the first chapter of Ephesians is that we would recognise that HIS FULLNESS resides in His Body, the Church.

NOT IN OUR FRAIL MORTAL BODIES, BUT IN OUR IMMORTAL BORN-AGAIN, HOLY SPIRIT SEALED SPIRITS. THIS IS WHY WE ARE CALLED TO WALK IN THE SPIRIT AND LIVE A SPIRIT LED LIFE!

So what is the key to living that Spirit filled life?

Pride versus Humility

Isaiah 66: 1-2

"Heaven *is* My throne,
 And earth *is* My footstool.
 Where *is* the house that you will build Me?
 And where *is* the place of My rest?
²For all those *things* My hand has made,
 And all those *things* exist,"
 Says the LORD.
 "But on this *one* will I look:
 On *him who is* poor and of a contrite(Humble) spirit,
 And who trembles at My word.

Is 57:15

For thus says the High and Lofty One
 Who inhabits eternity, whose name *is* Holy:
 "I dwell in the high and holy *place*,
 With him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit,
 To revive the spirit of the humble,
 And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.

Col 3:12-13

Therefore, as *the elect of God, holy and beloved*, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; ¹³bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*.

1 Peter 5:5 Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to *your* elders. Yes, all of *you* be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for

“God resists the proud,
But gives grace to the humble.”^[b]

⁶Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, ⁷casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.

Micah 6:8 “He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God.”

The key to a life led by the Spirit of God is humility. Humility is largely shunned by modern society but it is of enormous value to the Christian and of great worth to God. Most of society is geared towards enticing you to act with pride or pridefully and disguising it so it looks good. That’s deceit by the way!

We need to have:

- Humility in self-view and the view of others
 - Not to think too highly or lowly of ourselves or our importance
 - Val Harrison (Humility is the hallmark of your service)
 - Phil 2:3-4
 - **Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.**
- Humility in our ability to hear from others
- Humility in the need for correction/discipline.
 - This last point in particular is so lacking in the body of Christ, where it would seem every word of correction is taken as a personal affront (pride/offence) and is questioned by the inner/outer response of “who do you think you are to....”
 - This is grave error. Genuine growth often comes by way of correction/rebuke and responding with humility to process what has been shared well.

Jethro and Moses

Exodus 18: 10 – 24

And so it was, on the next day, that Moses sat to judge the people; and the people stood before Moses from morning until evening. ¹⁴So when Moses’ father-in-law saw all that he did for the people, he said, “What *is* this thing that you are doing for the people? Why do you alone sit, and all the people stand before you from morning until evening?”

¹⁵And Moses said to his father-in-law, "Because the people come to me to inquire of God. ¹⁶When they have a difficulty, they come to me, and I judge between one and another; and I make known the statutes of God and His laws."

¹⁷So Moses' father-in-law said to him, "The thing that you do *is* not good. ¹⁸Both you and these people who *are* with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing *is* too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself. ¹⁹Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. ²⁰And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. ²¹Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place *such* over them *to be* rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. ²²And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be *that* every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear *the burden* with you. ²³If you do this thing, and God *so* commands you, then you will be able to endure, and all this people will also go to their place in peace."

²⁴So Moses heeded the voice of his father-in-law and did all that he had said.

Even though Moses frequently received immediate verbal direction from God, he was not narrow in his understanding of how God speaks and directs. Since God ruled everything he could just as easily direct him through a father-in-law as from a cloud.

If God used Jethro's correction to direct Moses to greater effectiveness, how much more should we be humbly listening for God's direction in the correction of those he sends to us?