

## 6.26.22 / Worship Gratefully / Ephesians 1.3-14

Today we begin our summer sermon series that is in many ways a follow up to our last sermon series. We've just completed a seven week series called *Ascent: Following Moses Up the Path to Deeper Intimacy with God*. In that series, we joined Moses and the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai, and watched as God revealed His holy and loving character to Moses and His people and invited them to learn how to approach him in worship and adoration (available on podcasts).

In our new series, which will take us through the rest of the summer, we pick up on the theme of **worship and intimacy** with God, but move from the Old Testament to the New. This series, called *Seven Summits: Elevating our Worship Life*, explores the most important passages about worship in the New Testament.

I love this definition for worship that Pastor Travis often shares: **Worship is bringing all that you are before all that God is and allowing that communion to change your life.**

The first New Testament passage on worship that we're going to look at this summer is Ephesians 1:3-14. And before you turn there I'm going to show you a picture and tell you a story.

**Show Picture of Cooper.**

Cooper is about two years old and he is filled with energy and enthusiasm for life. Something that is true of Cooper and perhaps many of you experience this with your dog as well... he shows unbridled gratitude when you do something for him. i.e. let him off the leash/stake, say his name.

**What would it be like if we showed that kind of unbridled gratitude for things done for us?**

I realize that a dog's gratitude is a purely in-the-moment response that is not really tied to careful thoughtfulness of a broader context. So... the cynical among us might reason that **our** responses of gratitude are far more complex than a dog's - not nearly so short-sighted and impulse driven. None the less... it provides us with an interesting illustration of **unbridled gratitude**.

The passage we'll look at this morning (Ephesians 1:3-14) presents followers of Jesus with some reasons for unbridled gratitude.

Let's take a look: **Ephesians 1:3-14** (*read it*)

**Vs 3** is a great introduction to the paragraphs which follow. First we see a reference to the existence of Trinity – God the Father, God the Son. We read about the Spirit towards the end of this section.

**Us:** followers of Jesus

**Heavenly realms:** While the earthly realm exist in time and includes earth, the heavenly realm exist outside of time and includes everything in existence. **Illustration:** [String with tape on it.](#)

**Spiritual blessing:** Blessing of/from the Spirit. Spiritual blessings are in many ways **invisible** but very **real**. They exist in the heavenly realm while often muffled, foggy, or under realized in the earthly realm.

**“Every” spiritual blessing:** Whether Paul is speaking literally or hyberbolically – his point is clear. Followers of Jesus are recipients of countless spiritual blessings. **Illustration:** [Interestingly enough we picked on Cooper a while ago because of his short-sighted, impulse-driven gratitude. I wonder how often our gratitude or our lack of gratitude could be characterized as short-sighted and impulse-driven based purely upon the earthly realm without view of the heavenly realm. When we bring into view what we know of the heavenly realm we begin to see countless spiritual blessings.](#)

**In Christ:** Every spiritual blessing that we receive has been given through Jesus Christ – that is because of or through the actions of Jesus.

What Paul does next is he bursts forth with a list and some explanations of some of our spiritual blessings in Christ.

**By my count He mentions six.**

## 1. **He Chose us**

(vs4) He Chose us in him before the creation of the world – to be holy and blameless.

*Chose us* - That is He appointed us. He had the authority to do so and made the choice to do so. How does it feel to be chosen? In elementary school it's a relief to be chosen for the team. In high school it feels wonderful to be chosen for an award. As an adult, it is so very satisfying to be chosen for the position to which you applied. Followers of Jesus, God chose you.

*To be Holy and blameless* – we're not though... so He...

*In Him* – That is through the work of Jesus Christ

*Before the creation of the world* – God stands outside time. God didn't choose you because you are special. You are special because God choose you.

## 2. **He predestined us to be adopted**

Vs 5 Predestined us in love **for adoption** – to sonship – through JC – in accordance with His pleasure and will & to the praise of His glorious grace.

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2. He predestined us to be adopted
3. He lavishes us with glorious grace
4. He redeems us
5. He reveals the mystery of His will
6. He gives us His Spirit

Our eyes on our blessings bring our knees to the floor... in worship!

**Close in prayer.**

Our eyes on our blessings bring our knees to the floor. This isn't about the power of positive thinking. It's about fixing our eyes on the spiritual blessings that God us given. There is no real power in positive thinking; the real power is in your conversation partner if He is the Living God.

Our eyes on our blessings bring our knees to the floor. This isn't about a denial of pain, it's about remembering our spiritual blessings while we're in pain. When illness strikes or disaster falls or inconvenience crowds life... fixing your eyes on your spiritual blessings will bring you to your knees before your Heavenly Father which is the best place to be as you lament the difficulty of living in a broken world.

Our eyes on our blessings bring our knees to the floor. This isn't about running from sadness. It's about bringing our sadness to the giver of all spiritual blessings.

This isn't avoiding or minimizing the sad and broken things... it's about always keeping spiritual blessings in our view.

This isn't all about us – it's when we truly see and experience these spiritual blessings that we grow an urgency to help others experience these blessings which we all so desperately need.

1. He Chose us

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Predestined is to determine ahead of time. One might say that Adam and Kelly Meyers children are predestined to be Boilermaker fans and Mike and Annie Zientara's children are predestined to be Illini fans.

Followers of Jesus are predestined to be adopted. Folded into the family. God the Father becomes our father. We are His sons and daughters - we receive His care and provision, we're in relationship with Him – all of this is in accordance with His will flowing from His glorious grace.

To be a son or a daughter – many parents would give their lives for their children. Even as fallen human beings we parents can care for our children in pretty beautiful ways. Imagine the way that a perfect all-knowing and all powerful Heavenly Father would care for His children. Followers of Jesus, you have been predestined to that status – sons and daughters of the Living God.

[Stories of adoption: harmful environment – rescue – cared for... our story as well.](#)

### **3. He lavishes us with glorious grace**

**V 6 His glorious grace – which He freely gives... in the One He loves**

Grace is an underserved gift. His choosing and his predestination is an underserved gift extended from Him to us. There is no pressure attached.

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Illustration: Many of us have known (or perhaps been) a college student who receives a scholarship that is dependent about maintaining a certain GPA. That's a lot of pressure. Some students rise to that pressure; some collapse under the weight.

That scholarship is a **generous but conditional** offer. **Grace is not like that.** God's choosing of us, His predestination is grace – it's an unmerited gift!

#### 4. **He redeems us**

V7 In him... we have redemption through His blood – the forgiveness of sins – in accordance with the riches of His grace – that He lavishes on us!

To redeem or forgive is to release or set free to cancel a debt. We have broken to law of God's creation, the natural order of creatures obeying creator. By grace God offers to cancel that dept through the blood of Jesus – setting us free from a debt that brings death – opening us up to experiencing life submitted to God as He intended.

When I forget to pick up something at the store for my wife or speak to her in a hurtful way, she forgives to me. She absorbs the inconvenience and hurt of my failure. Not to downplay the gift she gives me in her forgiveness... but it does occur within the context of a relationship between two fallen people who have occasion to both extend and receive forgiveness daily.

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Our relationship with God is different. He is perfect and we are not. He does all of the forgiveness extending and none of the forgiveness receiving. He is a bottomless reservoir of forgiveness!

#### 5. **He reveals the mystery of His will**

**Made known to us the mystery of His will** – according to His good pleasure – purposed in Christ. We all love being let in on a big secret or figuring out a big mystery. For thousands of years, one of the most significant mysteries for the Jewish people

#### 6. **He gives us His Spirit**

Included (chosen) in Christ – when you heard the message of truth – having believed – you were **marked in him with a seal – HS – a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance** – of sons

**What does all of this teach us about worship? Our eyes on our blessings bring our knees to the floor.**

Share quote from J.I. Packer Knowing God – page 42

Our eyes on our blessings bring our knees to the floor. You'll notice that attention to these blessings doesn't puff us up. It brings us to our knees in gratitude to our Maker. It brings us into conversation with the One who truly knows us and loves us – the one who can truly help us.

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