

“Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow”

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Read Ephesians 1:3-14

Throughout this short letter, Paul speaks of God’s superabundant activities flowing from Himself to His people. Such words as “rich, lavish, surpassing greatness, surpassing riches, unfathomable riches, surpasses knowledge and far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think” (1:7, 8, 18, 19; 2:4, 7; 3:8, 16, 18, 19, 20) are employed in an attempt to capture the magnitude of God’s person and work to redeem His people from sin’s debt and to adopt them as sons. All of this was written by Him into His story (1:4, 5, 9, 11, 21; 2:7, 10; 3:11).

Paul’s opening sentence reaches from verse 3 to verse 14. Here is an avalanche of descriptive words that unveil what God did in the securing of His people for Himself. Here we read of God as a tri-unity working (**energy**) to secure for Himself worshipping sons and daughters. Our passage speaks of God the Father blessing (v. 3), choosing (v. 4) and adopting (vv. 5, 6) trespassers into His family. We can equally note the activity of the Son to redeem slaves by forgiving debt by means of His own substitutionary and voluntary death (vv. 7, 8). It is the Son who makes known to us the mystery of their eternal purpose (vv. 9, 10), how from rebellion, division, and damnation He brings peace, harmony, and life. It is through Him and in Him all things created find the object that silences the rage from within and the loneliness that robs and destroys. What is the outcome, the inheritance of His activity? Through Him, the alienated are adopted, the rebel is restored, the indebted are pardoned and the forsaken are chosen.

None of this is left to the recipient. The work, all of it in every area, is left to **the free bestowal and lavish dispensing of His grace**. He seals His people with the Holy Spirit of promise. This pledge, the seal, determines ownership and guarantees the outcome (vv. 13, 14).

God’s end game is that all things would be “to the praise of His glory” (vv. 6, 12, 14). A means to that end, at least in Ephesians, is by the redeeming of His people from sin and the adopting of the same as sons and daughters. These redeemed trespassers constitute His body, the Church. It is this Church that now becomes the means whereby God is glorified by all things outside of Himself. God did/does what no one else could do. He redeemed those who trespassed against Him, and He was fully engaged, in His essence and economy, in and during the entire process.

In this initial assault on our sensibility, there are hints given as to the extremity of His activity. Words such as *bless* assumes a state of being cursed; *chosen* assumes rejection, *adoption* presupposes abandonment, *redemption* takes for granted debt, *making known* demands previous blindness, *inheritance* speaks to disenfranchised, *sealing* and *pledge* contrasts with uncertainty and ambiguity.

All of the negatives are descriptive of a previously existing condition. There was nothing the cursed, rejected, abandoned, indebted, blind, disenfranchised and unstable could do to undo

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their preexisting condition. It is only as the Trinitarian God freely bestows and lavishly dispenses His resources without condition that the abandoned can become sons through adoption.

Where does this lead us? This leads us to the foot of His cross and to the glory of His throne. There is only one response that is appropriate and it is one of humble adoration and praise. We have no boast but the cross. He is our life and our living. What can we do but praise Him. He is the substance from which life makes sense. May we the redeemed gladly and openly declare our eternal indebtedness to the One whose essence and economy secures us from sin's debt and adopts us as sons.

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