

Text: Ephesians 1:3-14

Theme: Blessed to Be a Blessing

July 15, 2018

We live in a country that has an abundance, and, whether we acknowledge it or not, we possess an abundance. We can find someone who has more, but, at the end of the day, we've still been blessed with an abundance. But why do we have such an abundance? We'd like to believe that it's all our doing, but our abundance is actually a gift from God, a gift that's meant to be used to bless others. In today's text, Paul reminds us that we are blessed, blessed to be a blessing.

I. As Paul tells us, God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. A. But what does that statement say to us? 1. God has blessed us by choosing us. Our text says, "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world." Who chose who? Who claimed who? And when did that choosing occur? So, can we decide to come to faith if God chose us before He created the world? We were in the plan of God before God said, "Let there be light." That's incredible; that's amazing! God chose you; He chose me. What a blessing from God and how blessed we are that God chose us before He even began His creative work.

2. But God didn't stop there; He also adopted us. After God chose us, He realized that we were still lost, still disconnected, still alone. Yet God had a solution for our disconnected situation - adoption into His family. Having been in orphanages at different times when I traveled to Peru, it's evident that they are places where you want to belong somewhere, but you know you don't belong anywhere. Without God's intervention, that would have been our life, a life of existence. But God changed all that when He adopted us not into just any family, but into the most remarkable family in the world, the family of God.

3. Along with choosing and adopting, God has also redeemed us. But weren't we fine on our own? If carrying a heavy load of guilt is your definition of fine, maybe, but because we are sinners, we needed a solution for sin and that solution was Christ on the cross. God stepped into our world to bless us by sending His Son to the cross in our place. The entire Christian faith stands or falls based on our understanding of forgiveness. If we choose not to believe we're forgiven, we forfeit the gift of faith and ultimately the gift of eternal life. We are incredibly blessed by God because He chose to redeem us, to forgive us yesterday, today, and forever.

4. God also blessed us by making known the mystery of His Will. What does the word "mystery" imply? If God had kept His plan to Himself, would anything in life make sense? Would life have a purpose; would we have a reason to exist? Maybe we can't understand the mind of God, but God has blessed us by showing us tiny glimpses of His will, His plan, glimpses that show us what to do, where to go, and how we can impact the lives of others. As we pray, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven," we're asking God to show us those parts of His Will that we can understand in order that we, who are blessed by God, can be a blessing to others.

5. God has blessed us with an inheritance. Paul writes, "In Him we have obtained an inheritance." What do we know about inheritances? We don't deserve them; they are gifts from the giver that are meant to bless others. As God adopted us into His family, He said, "I have an eternal inheritance. planned for you." But there's a problem. We get so focused on this world, on worldly inheritances, and on the things of this life that we forget about our eternal inheritance. You may receive

an inheritance here, but that inheritance is a drop of water compared to the significance of God's inheritance, an inheritance given as a blessing from our God.

6. God has blessed us with the Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance. How many of you have seen the sign or bumper sticker, "I'm spending my kid's inheritance?" Inheritances on this side of heaven, do any of them come with guarantees? Inheritances here may or may not occur and we should be fine with it either way. But our eternal inheritance, that's an inheritance that needs to be secure, guaranteed. Thankfully, the Holy Spirit is our guarantee, our promise, our assurance. As long as the Holy Spirit is at work in our hearts and lives, we know, without any doubt, that we have been blessed with an eternal inheritance.

B. Aware of our blessings, why has God blessed us? 1. We are blessed to give glory to God. Why did God create you? Was it to do your thing in your way, to live and eventually die? God created you with one purpose - to give honor and praise to God. That's your reason and my reason for existence. All the rest is frosting on the cake. God blessed you with an abundance so that you would take the time to thank Him for all His gifts, to praise Him for the gift of life and all His other gifts. You aren't here for you, to accumulate more stuff, or to make your mark. You are here because God blessed you so that you would be led to offer Him your praise and appreciation.

2. We are blessed to serve. Why are some people so willing to serve and others so reluctant? Because some get it, and others don't, because some have the right motivation and others do not. The question of the moment is, "Which camp are you in?" When we know our God, when we understand what He has done for us, when we believe all we have is His gift to us, when we believe that we are blessed to be a blessing, serving is what we do and serving is done with a grateful heart. With serving as our goal, life looks different because our motivation is different and with that adjusted motivation, we serve the Lord with gladness.

3. We are blessed to accomplish God's mission for our lives. How many of us have been given a mission from God? How many of us are on a journey that He planned for us? When we realize we are blessed by God, we also realize that God put us here for a reason, that He has given us a mission, that we're on His journey. And before we think that journeying with Jesus is dull, boring, and monotonous, we need to realize that, when we're on His journey, we're on the most exciting, the most event-filled, the most fantastic, the most amazing journey we could ever imagine. Blessed by God, His mission will always be the most thrilling mission you ever encounter.

4. An abundance. We have it; we've been blessed with it. His question for you today is, "What are you going to do next because you have been blessed to be a blessing?" Amen.