

### 3. Why do we praise God?

September 30, 2012

Why do we praise our God? Is it because it is something we ought to do as Christians? Or is it because we always do it at Sunday morning services or the Midweek services before the teaching so that some people can sneak in late? If you stop any church attending Christian and ask them about that question, nine out of ten have to think about it.

Then some would answer, "Because He is worthy of our praises"; the others would say, "I don't know" with a shrug of their shoulders.

As apostle Paul wisely expounds the deep theologies of 'Predestination', 'Sovereignty of God', 'Free will of man', 'Election', 'Adoption', 'Redemption', 'Eternal Inheritance', etc in this first portion of chapter 1, you might feel overwhelmed with the depth of these theologies. But if you pay attention to what I am about to explain, you will get your own firm conclusion about the real reason why we WANT to praise Him, not because we MUST.

#### A. EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING

*Ephesians 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,* Here is the answer from the get go – our Lord has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. You talk about the serious Christian's riches in Christ – God's grace, glory, mercy, unsearchable riches of Him.

The variations of the word "Bless" appear 482 times in the Bible. The Greek for 'bless' is "eulogetos". Of course, from this word, we get our English word 'eulogy' of which definition is "praise," "fine speaking," or "blessing".

By the way, don't wait for a funeral to say good things about your family member or friend. Say to them while they are alive as an encouragement.

Can you tell that our Lord enjoys blessing His people? Please note the two words in past tense that the apostle used "has blessed". It means that our blessings were already secured in heaven and then given to us. They came from above. In other words, they're heavenly, not earthly; spiritual, not material; eternal, not temporal.

*James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and comes down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shadow of turning.*

From v4 to v14, apostle Paul lists nine blessings we must remember so that we can praise our Lord with all of our hearts, minds, souls, and bodies.

I can divide this section in three ways:

v3-6: the Father initiated His plan of salvation

v7-12: the Son implemented the plan

v13-14: the Spirit empowers the plan

#### B. BECAUSE HE HAS CHOSEN US

*Ephesians 1:4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love,*

Here is one of the great definitions of “Election” straight from the Bible.

The doctrine of ‘election’ teaches that we are saved only because of God’s grace and mercy; as believers we are not saved by our own merit. It focuses on God’s purpose or will, not on ours. God does not save us because we deserve it but because He graciously and freely gives salvation to everyone who is willing to receive in His way.

This profound truth was designed to motivate us to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which all of us have been called.

### **C. BECAUSE HE HAS PREDESTINED AND ADOPTED US**

*Ephesians 1:5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,*

“Predestined,” ‘proorizo’ in the Greek, means “marked out beforehand.” Because God chose to elect us, He placed a special mark on us – He predestined us with the knowledge that He would one day adopt us.

Under Roman law, which served as a backdrop for Paul’s writing, adopted children enjoyed the same rights as natural children. In the same way, we enjoy the same rights and privileges as Christ Himself – God’s natural Son.

By now, if we have a group of Arminianism people in this room, they would raise their voice to argue, “But what about the free will of man? It is in the Bible all over.” In short, Arminianism people believe that a believer of Christ can lose one’s salvation by sinning against the Lord while Calvinists would argue that a Christian can never lose one’s salvation no matter what because he or she is predestined.

The reason why people have such a hard time understanding and accepting both predestination by God and free will of man is that people, especially theologians of both sides – Arminianists and Calvinists – try to put God’s original intention into the mold of their own denominational agendas. The problem is that God’s intention for ‘predestination through the sovereignty of God’ and ‘free will of man’ is so much bigger than their puny mold, it cannot be fitted into it.

Instead of trying to put God’s way into our mold, if we take His way as is, we can understand it without a problem. Let me explain. By God’s sovereign knowledge, He knew who is going to receive Jesus into one’s heart by one’s free will, so the Lord has predestined that person. Is that difficult? No, so simple and so logical, just the way He intended.

### **D. BECAUSE HE HAS REDEEMED US**

*Ephesians 1:6-7a to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. 7 In Him we have redemption through His blood,*

Redemption means purchasing and setting free by paying a price. In OT times according to Leviticus 25:47-54, the word ‘redemption’ referred to a person’s being set free from slavery or prison. Redeeming this person involved paying a price called a ransom.

Since God also redeemed us – set us free from the bondage of our own sins and the sinful nature we inherited from Adam – He had to pay a price. How did He do it? Not with silver or gold, but with the ransom of the precious blood of His own Son Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 1:18-19 knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

### **E. BECAUSE HE HAS FORGIVEN US**

*Ephesians 1:7b [In Him we have] the forgiveness of sins,*  
Because Jesus paid our ransom, God no longer holds against us the debt our sin incurred. He has forgiven all our sins. This means that He no longer considers any of our transgressions – past, present, or future. Sin made us poor with the spiritual debt that would condemn us to hell, but the grace of God makes us rich in Him.

*Psalm 103:12 As far as the east is from the west, So far has He removed our transgressions from us.*

### **F. BECAUSE HE LAVISHED HIS GRACE ON US**

*Ephesians 1:7c-8a according to the riches of His grace, which He made to abound toward us*

While God's mercy does not give us what we deserve, His grace gives us what we don't deserve. We deserve eternal damnation, but we receive infinite riches in Christ. Why? Because of God's grace. I just love the sound of the word 'lavish' in NASB:

*Ephesians 1:7c-8a according to the riches of His grace & which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight NASB*

God's grace was not reluctantly rationed to us, rather He dumped on us, lavished on us abundantly. That is our gracious God.

### **G. BECAUSE HE MADE KNOWN THE MYSTERY OF HIS WILL TO US**

*Ephesians 1:8b-10 in all wisdom and prudence, 9 having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, 10 that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth--in Him.*

Although many of God's decisions were made in eternity past before the creation of the universe, He chose not to reveal some of them for a long time. Throughout the OT times, our OT biblical heroes, such as Abraham, Moses, David, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and other OT prophets longed to know how the Lord was going to pull off salvation for His followers. Even satan didn't know. If he knew, he would never let Jesus Christ die for our sins on the cross.

But that secret, mystery of God's will has been made known to us through Jesus' death and resurrection. Through Jesus, the Jews and the Gentiles can integrate into a single body, the church.

### **H. BECAUSE HE HAS PROVIDED AN ETERNAL INHERITANCE**

*Ephesians 1:11-12 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, 12 that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory.*

Our inheritance takes two forms. In the present, we enjoy all the rewards of our salvation – peace with God and brotherhood with Christ. In the future, we'll inherit all the wealth of heaven. And our portion is irrevocable!

In addition to that, we are joint-heirs with Christ, which means that He cannot claim His inheritance apart from us. Isn't that cool or what?

*Romans 8:17a and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ*

Once we were nobody, just rotten sinners who were bound for hell with eternal damnation. Then, the Lord our God extended His grace upon us so that we can be saved in Jesus and receive His riches. And now we are true children of God Almighty. Do you get it?

## **I. BECAUSE HE HAS SEALED US IN CHRIST**

*Ephesians 1:13 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,*

Before we got saved by Jesus, we were slaves of satan doing his business without knowing; but now we are set free from his iron grip of bondage. If we are not protected by God after we were set free, the devil would come after us to take us back.

Remember, in the Book of Exodus the Hebrews were told that they could leave Egypt after those 10 disastrous plagues one after another from God through Moses. After the 2 million Hebrews left, the Egyptians changed their minds and wanted their slaves back by coming after them with their army.

So the Holy Spirit put Himself as a Seal of God's promise by residing in the born-again believers' hearts when they receive Jesus as the Savior and Lord.

## **J. BECAUSE HE HAS GUARANTEED OUR INHERITANCE**

*Ephesians 1:14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*

We use this practice of guarantee in daily business – downpayment. Downpayment guarantees the final purchase of a particular business transaction.

The Holy Spirit is God's first installment to guarantee to His children that He will finish His work and eventually bring them to glory.

## **K. THE RICHES IN CHRIST TELLS US THAT**

1) It is a source of great encouragement to know that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are all working on our behalf to make us spiritually rich.

2) All of these riches come by God's grace and for God's glory.

3) These riches are only the beginning! There is always more spiritual wealth to claim from the Lord as we walk with Him.

The Bible is our guidebook; the Holy Spirit is our Teacher. As we search the Word of God daily, we discover more and more of the riches we have in Christ. These riches were planned by the Father, purchased by the Son, and presented by the Spirit. There is really no need for us to live in spiritual poverty when all of God's wealth is at our disposal.

Now you know why we need to praise our great God.