

# Ephesians 1:1-3 by Wayne Barber

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## EPHESIANS 1:1 ARE YOU FAITHFUL IN CHRIST JESUS? By Dr. Wayne A. Barber

**Ephesians 1:1** [Paul](#) an [apostle](#) of [Christ Jesus by](#) the will of [God](#), to the [saints](#) who [are](#) ([PAPMPD](#)) at [Ephesus](#) and *who are* [faithful in Christ Jesus](#): (See onsite in depth commentary)

We're still in Ephesians 1:1. I love getting into the study of a book. I love digging in and finding the riches that are there. We may be in this book for a while. This is the third message in verse 1, but there's so much here that we need to see.

In verse one we found out something about the author. "*Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.*" We see that Paul was a man just like you and just like me in the respect that he had feet of clay. As a believer he did not get anything different than what you or I received in the Lord Jesus Christ. We are all complete in Christ. However, when Christ put out the callings and the gifts, He cuts the pie the way He wants to cut it. Paul got a little bigger slice than what some of us might have gotten. He was

"an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God."

The word "**God**" does not have the definite article in front of it. It refers to the whole Godhead. When the **definite article** is used it refers to **God the Father**. But here it is **God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit** The whole Trinity was involved in Paul being an apostle of Christ Jesus.

The word "will", [thelema](#), means the result of God's will. So, as the result of the counsel of the Trinity, Paul was an apostle of Christ Jesus. He was a man sent forth with a message that was not his own. But then secondly, we saw something about the audience of the book of Ephesians.

"...to the saints who are at [Ephesus](#) and who are faithful in Christ Jesus."

These were saintly saints. They were not just saints by position. Now what do I mean by that? When a person receives Christ he has been cleansed, set apart now, for the use of God. He is God's own property. However, these were saints not just positionally. They lived saintly in this world. Experientially, daily, they lived faithfully, it says, "...in Christ Jesus."

Now we want to look a little bit deeper at this audience. It was a Gentile audience.

Remember God gave to Paul the ministry of the [Gentiles](#). He was a Jew, and God gave him the burden to preach the gospel to the Gentile world. This was quite a problem with his Jewish brethren. You say, "Why was it important the Ephesians were Gentiles?" Well, the book of James was written to predominantly a Jewish audience. The book of Hebrews was the same way. Here it is written to a Gentile audience. Look in Eph 3:1-note. He says it very clearly:

"...for this reason I, Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles..."

Actually, this is the word for "nations," but it is the word we translate [gentile](#)." So Paul is writing to a Gentile audience.

Now, as you know, this Gentile nation was in Asia Minor. How do we know that? [Ephesus](#) was on the western coast of Asia Minor, which is modern day Turkey. Ephesus was a seaport on the western coast of Asia Minor. It was the fourth largest city in the Roman Empire. It was a city with a population of about 300,000. [\[Click here for pictorial tour of Ephesus\]](#) When Rick Shepard, my Associate Pastor of Family Ministries, and I had the privilege this past summer of going to Greece, we got to see this city. The city has a seaport which is about 8 miles inland now because of the change of the waters there. It is no longer right on the coast. There is a thoroughfare, which used to go from the seaport all the way up a long hill to a big auditorium, actually an outside theatre that would hold about 25,000 people. As you get up to that auditorium, on the right is the remnant of the temple of [Artemis](#) [also called Diana], which was their focus of worship, their goddess, there at that time. As we got to that thoroughfare on both sides were these large pillars. They were just gorgeous. And on the other side of the pillars were places where they used to sell things. Most of them

probably sold little statues of their goddess Artemis which Paul had to deal with when he was there in Ephesus.

[click for virtual tour](#)

(See also excellent [25 minute youtube video on ruins and history of Ephesus narrated by Dr Joseph Stowell](#) - with excellent spiritual applications)

The Temple of Artemis was one of the seven wonders of the world. [Ed note:[Click for artist reconstruction](#)] Even what's left is majestic [Ed note: [Click for "what's left"](#)]. Paul had visited Ephesus on several occasions. In Acts 18 and verse 19, he stopped there for a brief visit on his [second missionary journey](#). But on the [third missionary journey](#), he goes straight to Ephesus and stays two years. Let's look at Acts 19 and sort of review some of this so you can get familiar with who Paul is writing to, the audience of Ephesians. In Acts 19:1, he fulfills his promise and goes to Ephesus...

"It happened that while [Apollos](#) was at Corinth, Paul passed through the upper country and came to Ephesus, and found some disciples."

Remember, he stayed two years there and ministered to the disciples. This is where many, many miracles took place. In fact one of the miracles is when he cast the demons out of the sons of [Sceva](#). Let's look at Acts 19:17+

"This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified."

Here at Ephesus God had done a powerful work. In the shadow of the Temple of Artemis, the false goddess of that area, God had moved in. And through Paul, as he preached the gospel, allowed him to do many miracles. People began to respond to the gospel of Jesus Christ. If you'll go to Acts 19:25ff, it says some of the merchants were upset because they sold little statues of the goddess Artemis, and now Paul was ruining their business...

Acts 19:26+ And you see and hear that not only in Ephesus, but in almost all of Asia, this Paul has persuaded and turned away a considerable number of people, saying that gods made with hands are no gods at all. 27 "And not only is there danger that this trade of ours fall into disrepute, but also that the temple of the great goddess Artemis be regarded as worthless and that she whom all of Asia and the world worship should even be dethroned from her magnificence." 28 And when they heard this and were filled with rage, they began crying out, saying, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians!" 29 And the city was filled with the confusion, and they rushed with one accord into the theater, dragging along Gaius and Aristarchus, Paul's traveling companions from Macedonia. 30 And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him. 31 And also some of the Asiarchs who were friends of his sent to him and repeatedly urged him not to venture into the theater. 32 So then, some were shouting one thing and some another, for the assembly was in confusion, and the majority did not know for what cause they had come together. 33 And some of the crowd concluded it was Alexander, since the Jews had put him forward; and having motioned with his hand, Alexander was intending to make a defense to the assembly. 34 But when they recognized that he was a Jew, a single outcry arose from them all as they shouted for about two hours, "Great is Artemis of the Ephesians."

And Acts 19:30 says that, ".And when Paul wanted to go into the assembly, the disciples would not let him."

Paul had created chaos in Ephesus. So you begin to get a feel about the Christians that had to live there. Paul left, but they are left there. This is who Paul is writing to in the book of Ephesians. In Acts 20:16 Paul skirts Ephesus. He's on his way to Jerusalem. Remember God said, "I want you in Jerusalem and I want you in Rome." In order to get to Jerusalem on the feast of [Feast of Pentecost](#) he skirts Ephesus. He knows that if he stops it is going to take him too long to leave. But he goes to [Miletus](#), and in Acts 20:17, he calls the elders of the church of Ephesus to come to him. Paul is concerned. Paul says, "after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock;" (**ED: MEETING WITH ELDERS RECORDED IN Acts 20:17-38+**)

Who is he talking about? Probably the legalizers of that day. You see, Paul used to be a savage wolf himself. He knew how they worked. As soon as the gospel of grace was preached and the people had responded to it and he was gone, people would come in with false doctrine and try to put the people back under bondage. As a matter of fact, Ephesus had a lot of trouble with false doctrines. You see this over and over again. In 1Ti 1:3 it says that Paul left Timothy there in Ephesus to correct the false doctrine of that area. It was an area which was infiltrated with that which was not the truth of God's word. The saddest story about Ephesus, I think, is in Revelation 2:1-7+ when it becomes the first of the seven churches that John is told to write. The church at Ephesus is the church that left its first love (Rev 2:4+) (**ED: THIS IS ONLY 30 YEARS AFTER PAUL HAD BEEN THE RESIDENT TEACHER! HAD THEY FORGOTTEN OR FAILED TO PASS ON THE COMMAND IN Eph 5:1-2+?**)

So you begin to get a feel about the church at Ephesus and the audience he is writing to. So, as we get into this study, we want to

just dig it as deep as we can and see what it can mean to us. Some of the phrases are so powerful in Ephesians 1:1

"Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus:."

The title of this message is, "Are you faithful in Christ Jesus?" What does it mean to be faithful in Christ Jesus?

**Well, first of all the little phrase, "[in Christ Jesus](#)" points to our character as believers.**

Do you know the difference between **reputation** and **character**? Your reputation is what you want people to think you are. Your character is what everybody who lives with you and knows you knows that you are. The fact that they were faithful in Christ Jesus points to the character of these believers.

The Greek work for "**faithful**" is the word, **pistos**. It is the adjective used to describe the saintly saints. It comes from the word, **peitho** which means to win over, to persuade. Peitho is translated "to obey" in Hebrews. It has the understanding of someone who has been totally persuaded to the point of a willingness to obey. It means trustworthy. It means dependable to do what God said to do.

Now there are several references in the NT using the word "pistos". I want us to look at it because as I researched the word it drew a picture of what it means to be **faithful in Christ Jesus**. When the term is used in relation to God it means something different than when it is used in relation to man. Why? Because God is perfect. When you say **God is faithful**, He never errs in His faithfulness to do what He says He will do. As a matter of fact, in 1Cor 1.9, Paul says that **God is faithful**, describing God's character. He is absolutely faithful. You say, "Oh brother Wayne, I trusted God's word, and God hasn't done what He said He would do in my life." Well, if you've trusted Him and you stood upon His word and He has not moved, then it is just not time for Him to move. You wait upon the Lord. God does what He says He will do.

(**Ed note on "FAITH"**: "When John Paton was translating the Bible for a South Seas island tribe, he discovered that they had no word for trust or faith. One day a native who had been running hard came into the missionary's house, flopped himself in a large chair and said, "It's good to rest my whole weight on this chair." "That's it," said Paton. "I'll translate faith as 'resting one's whole weight on God.'" [Ephesians MacArthur New Testament Commentary](#) )

**1Corinthians 1:9** "God is faithful, through Whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord."

**Heb 10:23** Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful"

That is the beautiful attribute of God (Click for Attributes of God). He is absolutely, purely faithful to what He says. Now when you take that word "faithful" and apply it to man, it doesn't mean perfection! But it has a lot to say about the character of a believer. For instance, look in Lk 16:10. You want to know whether or not you are faithful? Then watch this. He said,

**Luke 16:10**: "He who is faithful (pistos) in a very little thing is faithful also in much and he who is unrighteous (unjust) in a very little thing is unrighteous (unjust) also in much."

If God's character is to be dependent upon whatever He says He will do and that character is within us, then we need to find out if we are dependable. Are we faithful? You say, "How can I know if I am faithful?" Look at the little things in your life. Oh, listen, if something big happens to us, many of us will rally and become faithful. But it's not just in the big things. It is in the little things where you find the depend-ability and trustworthiness of an individual. Let me ask you a question. Do you have a grudge against anybody? Are you critical in your heart toward a brother? If you do, you are not a faithful believer in the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Because God's word says, "Let not the sun go down..."

You are to deal with your anger. You are to deal with your problem with somebody else. And if you are not doing that, you are not dependable to do what the word of God says to do. That's a little thing, yes. But, my friend, if you are not faithful in that little thing, then obviously you are not faithful in the big things that God has for you. Do you want to know whether or not you are faithful in Christ Jesus? Are you a Saintly Saint? Are you faithful in the little things? You see, that's your character. It's what your family knows about you. It's what happens when you are sitting there watching the television and something immoral comes on. Do you turn it off or do you leave it on? Are you faithful in the little things? Are you faithful in your thought life? Are you faithful when you are by yourself? One of the greatest measures of a man's faithfulness before God is not what he is in the appearance of others but what he is when he is by himself. And God knows that, folks. He knows whether or not you are dependable to do what He tells you to do. It's a measure of a man's character. It's a measure of his love for Christ. This word "**faithful in Christ Jesus**" defines the character of a servant of God. If you are a servant of God then you are faithful before him.

In **Heb 3:5** it says that

**Heb 3:5** Now Moses was faithful in all His house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken later

Who are the people who are faithful in Christ Jesus? They are servants. They are bondservants. They do what they do for Him because they want to, not because they have to. You know it even defines the character of the wives of leaders within the church. I thought that was interesting. It speaks specifically of deacons.

Look in 1Ti 3:11. You see when you appoint someone to an office within the church, whether elder or whether deacon, you are not just appointing the man. You are appointing his wife. She is just as accountable to God as the man. The word for "women" and the word for "wife" is the same word.

**1Ti 3:11** Wives must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things.

You may have a man that is as godly as any man that has ever been around. But he may have a wife that cannot keep her mouth shut. She just continues to carry information to this person and this person and this person. That wife is not faithful before God. That disqualifies her and him from being in that office. It defines the character of one to whom Christ can entrust ministry.

**1Ti 1:12** I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who has strengthened me, because He considered me faithful, putting me into service

*"...and I thank Christ Jesus our Lord who has strengthened me"*

Now watch,

*"that He considered me faithful..."*

That was first, then,

*"...putting me into the service (ministry)."*

I don't know how many people come to this church and want a ministry. They come to me and say, "Wayne, can you give me a ministry?" Man does not give to another man a minis-try. God gives the ministry. It's received, not achieved. So when we are faithful God will give us the ministry He wants for us. But the key is, are we faithful in Christ Jesus? It defines the character of men who qualify to be disciples of other men.

Look at what it says in **2Ti 2:2** (note).

"The things which you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses, entrust these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also."

If you don't have a man who is living it, then you don't have a man who can teach it. That is why one of the OT prophets says, "I want to know thy law. I want to do thy law. Then I want to teach thy law." [cf Ezra 7:10-note] You can't teach what you are not living. If you are not faithful in the little things you are not a saintly saint. Paul is not writing to the unfaithful. Paul is writing to the ones faithful in Christ Jesus. Not just positionally saints, beloved, but the delight of God in Ephesus.

Can you imagine the horrible situation they are in in Ephesus? There was idolatry and wrong doctrine everywhere. And there were the faithful few to whom Paul writes the book of Ephesians. "**Faithful**" points to the character of the believers at Ephesus. One of the things I think is most important is that you can determine your measure of faithfulness: it's not in the big things, but in the little things. That stuck with me when I was studying this. I remember when my children came to know Christ, or said they did. But you wonder if they have really understood. You go through that wrestling match in your mind. You don't want them to wake up like I did at 32 years old having been in the ministry 8 years and realized I didn't even know Christ. We have got to understand something here. I know what might be an encouragement to your heart about that. There was one thing my wife, Diana, and I watched for in Stephen and in Stephanie. Of course since Stephanie was first and older, we watched for it in her first. Stephen came along behind her. They came at an early age, and they asked to receive Christ in their life. In order for me to know they understood, I watched for some-thing. I watched for a willingness to repent and confess sin when they became aware of it in their life. I can remember Stephanie when she was very, very little, around seven or eight. Sometimes she would have her head over on the counter or the table, and Diana would say, "Stephanie, what's wrong? Are you sick?" "Oh no, momma. I have had some awful, awful thoughts this morning and I am just asking God to forgive me." As a matter of fact I saw that develop as pattern in her life when she was very small. The same thing developed in Stephen. I do not have perfect kids. When you speak of faithfulness you are not speaking of perfection. You are speaking of people who are dependable to do what God says to do when they become aware of it. For instance, David was a man after God's own heart. Did that mean he was perfect? Are you kidding? He committed adultery then took the husband of the woman he had committed adultery with and had him murdered in battle. How can he be called a man after God's own heart? I'll tell you how. Because when Nathan came and put his finger between David's eyes and said, "Thou art the man" he repented. Psalm 32:1ff and Psalm 51:1ff were written by a man who was filled with remorse. He repented before God, confessed his sin, and turned back to the

way that God had put before him.

### What does it mean to be faithful in Christ Jesus?

Well, watch those little things in your life. Sometimes faithfulness is not seen before the failure. Sometimes faithfulness is more clearly seen after the failure, when you have messed up. What do you do when you have messed up? Do you go around talking about other believers? Do you criticize them as if you were the standard? Do you repeat things when you don't even have the information yourself? Do you second-guess other people? Are you busy with this kind of lifestyle? How can you call yourself faithful in Christ Jesus? You are not. You may be a saint. But you're not a saintly saint. You are not living as God wants you to live. In Ephesians 4-6 Paul has to instruct, exhort and encourage the Ephesian believers. Why did he have to encourage them if they were already perfect? Faithfulness does not mean perfection. It is a measure of a person's character. It is a love for the love of the Lord Jesus Christ. So it points to the character of one who is a believer who is faithful in Christ Jesus.

### Secondly, it points to the source behind their character.

Now don't start praising believers. Let's don't all go to Ephesus and pat them all on the back and say, "Man, I love you guys! You're doing it right!" NO! You don't praise men. You praise God who lives in men that enables men to be what they are. Look at the phrase, "...faithful...". Now look at the next three words "...in Christ Jesus...". There are three prepositions that are similar, but yet at the same time drastically different. The preposition "eis" ([1519](#)), is translated "into something." For instance the man walked into the house. That's into, eis. Then there's a preposition "ek", which means "out of" which means the opposite. The man walked out of the house. It's motion out of something: Eis - into something, [Ek](#) -out of something.

But then there's another preposition we're looking at today--"[en](#)". It means the man remains "in" the house, "in" Christ Jesus. Now that means a whole lot more than what I am going to share, so for you scholars--relax. I am not going to touch every base. But there's one aspect of it that I want to show you. Any ability we have in the Christian life to be faithful before God, or whatever else we are talking about, is not of us. It's because we are in Christ Jesus. And as a result of us being in Him, He in turn is in us. That is the only way any man can be faithful or dependable. It's only as he is willing to submit and cooperate with that which is in the person that is in him. Look at John 14, just as a thought. As I was studying this really came to my mind. We see evidence of Christ doing what He said He would do in His faithfulness by how the Ephesian believers were able to live in the midst of all kinds of degradation.

**John 14:18, 19, 20** I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. "After a little while the world will no longer see Me, but you will see Me; because I live you will live also. In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.

"I will not leave you as orphans..." Jesus said this to His disciples in His private discussion after Judas had left. "...I will come to you. After a while the world will behold me no more, but you will behold me. Because I live you too shall live. In that day...", referring to what He just said, "...you shall know...", "[ginosko](#)", experience, "...that I am in my Father and you in me and I in you."

Faithful in Christ Jesus.

If you ever see anything good in me, you know good and well where it came from. It didn't come from me. It came from He who is in me and whose I am. It came from the Lord Jesus Himself. It's the same with you. If you see something about me that reminds you of yourself, don't be critical of me. Just remember we all are potentially the same way. I am not preaching Wayne. I am preaching the Word. You know I am gong to be wrong at times. I don't ever tell you I am the authority. The Bible is the authority. You know that. I am learning with you. When you see something in me that is good, remember it is not me, it must be Christ in me. I know what my flesh is all about. However, I am thankful that I am a saint having been set apart unto Him. I am not some old lousy sinner everyday. If I am, I haven't met Christ yet. He set me aside. I am for a different purpose, and I cannot habitually live in sin anymore. First John tells me that. The ability to be faithful as well as any other ability concerning our responsibilities to Christ is an ability that comes from our being in Him and Him being in us. **Pistis [word study]** is another word in the same family. It is usually translated **faith**. The word we have been looking at is **pistos**. Most of the time it is translated "faith." But I think, one time in the NAS, it is translated a better way. It is translated "faithfulness". If you'll look with me in Gal 5:22, let's notice that there is something produced by the Spirit of Christ.

**Galatians 5:22** (note) "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness..."

The word is **Pistis**, not **pistos**. It is translated **faithfulness**. I have to believe that the result of the Spirit of God working in your life and working in my life produces a consistency of dependability to do whatever God said. It's not perfection, but when we err we run to do what God has told us to do. So "...the faithful in Christ Jesus..." refers to the character of believers. But it refers to the source behind the believers. As a matter of fact, it is the resurrection power of Christ that provides the ability to live this way under God. Let me show you.

In Ephesians 1:1 Paul says, "...faithful in...". What are the last two words? "...Jesus Christ..." Is that what your translation says? No! "...Christ Jesus..." That's important. Why is it important? Before His resurrection He was known as Jesus. That was His earthly name, but after He resurrected it changed to Christ. He is known to be the Christ. Now listen, when you see that you are talking about the resurrected Lord Jesus Christ. And it is His resurrected power administered by the Holy Spirit of God that enables you and me to be dependable and faithful in Christ Jesus. Let me ask you a question.

Are you faithful in Christ Jesus? I don't know, I don't live with you. What are you like in your conversations? What are you like in your business life? How much do you cheat on your income taxes? Why do you try to make people think you are something when you know good and well you are not? That is not what it means to be faithful in Christ Jesus. It's even in the little things. How you treat the waitress when she comes to the table, and you ordered beans, and she brings peas, and they're cold has a lot to do with whether or not you're faithful in Christ Jesus. You cannot tell me that a person can be rude to the people God died for and turn right around and claim to be faithful in Christ Jesus. How do you know they are faithful? By the little things. And if they are faithful in little, they will be much. Well, are you faithful this morning in Christ Jesus? I could never point a finger. There are too many times when I am unfaithful. But the believers at Ephesus were faithful. They were saintly saints. And Paul in Ephesians 1 wants them to be enlightened about a few things. In Chapter 2 he wants them to remember some things, things that will help them. In chapter 3 he wants them to understand and comprehend some things that will bless their socks off. And then in chapters 4-6 he has some things to encourage and instruct them with that will help these saintly saints keep on living as the saints God wants them to be.

Can God count on you in the little things?  
Can you be called a true servant of Christ?  
Can God trust you with a ministry?  
Do you want a ministry?  
Can God trust you?  
Are you faithful?  
Are you the one that can disciple others?  
Can you share the Word?  
If you are not living it yourself,  
how can you teach it to anyone else.

Well, this is quite a group of people we are studying. They were saintly saints amidst all the idolatry and deception you could possibly imagine in the western area of Asia Minor of their day.

## EPHESIANS 1:2: PAUL'S DESIRE FOR THE SAINTS IN EPHESUS by Dr. Wayne Barber

**Ephesians 1:1** Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 [Grace](#) to you and [peace from God](#) our [Father and](#) the [Lord Jesus Christ](#).

Turn with me to Ephesians chapter 1. We are going to move to verse 2. We found in verse 1 that the audience of the book of Ephesians was saintly saints that were faithful in Christ Jesus. That is important to understand. They were not just saints positionally. They were saints experientially. They were daily dependable to do the things God had told them to do. They were not perfect, but they were dependable. How did they do that? They were faithful IN Christ Jesus. Because they were IN Him and because He was IN them, they were enabled to do something they could not have done apart from His power. So what a wonderful audience we are looking at and Paul is writing to in Ephesians. Paul does something in verse 2 that he does in all of the 13 epistles that we know for sure that he wrote. He gives them a greeting. Now I love something about the New Testament epistles. The authors signed it before they wrote it. Wouldn't it be wonderful if you could get a letter that was signed before you had to read it? Then you could make up your mind if you wanted to read it or not. They signed the epistle and then they would write it. Paul tells who he is; he tells who he is writing to; and he gives them a greeting.

In Ro 1:7, 1Co 1:3; 2Co1:2; Gal 1:3; Php1:2; Col 1:2; 1Th 1:1; 2Th 1:2; Philemon 1:3 Titus 1:4 Paul uses the exact same words as in Ephesians 1:2. There's something that is significant about that. In I and II Timothy he adds a word. He says, "**Grace...**", and he adds, "**...mercy...**", and then, "...peace to you from God our Father and from Christ Jesus our Lord." To pass this off as a simple greeting to me is to miss the point. I believe in the plenary [**Ed note:** plenary means full or complete in every respect] verbal inspiration of scriptures. That means every word of God is inerrant, infallible and inspired. If that's the case, this is not just Paul writing this greeting, this is the Holy Spirit of God inspiring Paul to write this greeting. And if the Holy Spirit inspired him, then there's something

we need to look at in the greeting that he gives to the church at Ephesus.

The greeting was more than just a formality. It was a wish, a desire of the apostle to the audience that he was writing. Let's look at it. He says in verse 2,

"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."

The older I am getting the deeper these words are becoming to me, and the more I realize how ineffective I can be in even sharing them. But perhaps we'll get a glimpse of these two words. We're all desperate for them. The word "**grace**" is the word **charis** [**word study**]. It comes from the word "**chairo**", which means to rejoice. Certainly when you begin to understand the word "grace" there's a rejoicing in your heart. I was thinking about the song "Glad". Oh man, I love that song. "Oh be ye glad, be ye glad". Rejoice for what the Lord has done for you. When you understand grace there's such a lift that comes in your spirit.

How many of you are just beaten down? How many of you feel like you're in a valley? You look around you and nothing seems very appealing. When you come to God's word and you begin to understand God's grace, there ought to be lifting of your spirit. There ought to be a rejoicing in your soul.

GOD IS A GOD OF GRACE.  
GRACE IS FAVOR THAT IS DONE  
WITHOUT EXPECTATION OF RETURN.

Now as believers we have to come to understand this. We have to come to understand it is the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to mankind. What kind of God do we serve? We serve a God that is filled with lovingkindness. He is a God of grace. As a matter of fact, the first time you ever find the word "**grace**" it's in the Hebrew. It's in Genesis 6 [KJV Gen 6:8] when God decided to **covenant** with **Noah**. He looked down on this earth and saw all the sin, filth, wickedness and evil, and God had grace upon Noah. Not only did He spare Noah and his family, He spared all of creation because God is a God of integrity. This God of grace, who created mankind, did not abandon it just because mankind rebelled against him. Oh no! He is committed to what He created.

His plan of **redemption** unfolds throughout all of Scripture. It is what forgives the sinner and what brings joyfulness and thankfulness to his heart. It is what changes an individual. Grace is more than just the nature of God in His character. It is something He expresses to us. It's the changing power of God. It's what takes a man who is a sinner, bound and blinded by sin, and lifts him up out of the mire. God changes him. He transforms him. It's God that does that. It's grace that does this. Grace always deals with man's sin. Grace is that free expression of God to mankind, who rebelled against Him, that enters into a man's life and deals with his sin and transforms him and fills his heart with gladness. It fills his heart with rejoicing. I'll tell you what, folks. If you have been living under the grace of God today, you're a different person because of it. It has lifted your spirits to realize God loves you so much that He freely expressed that love by sending His son into this world.

So many people relegate grace just to salvation. They've overlooked the fact that grace continues on and on. It's the ongoing changing power of God. It's the ongoing willingness of God to deal with the sinfulness of even His bride the church. We must understand that.

I took the word "**grace**" and ran it through the book of Ephesians and began to get a picture of what we are talking about. Obviously it is not a complete picture because it is used in all of the Scriptures. You must take the whole before you can understand it completely. But let's look at it and see if from Ephesians we can understand a little bit more about what grace really is.

Look at Eph 1:5-6 In verse 5 he says, "He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ Himself, according to the kind intention of His will..." Do you see the heart of God? "...to the praise of the glory of His grace which He freely bestowed on us in the beloved." Now don't forget those last two words. You see **grace** is a free expression. That's right! But it was very expensive to God to be able to express it. We forget this. **Grace** is very costly. Yes, it is free to man, and man cannot earn it. God just decided to display and to manifest it to man. But what it cost God to do that is what we must understand. To talk about grace as just the kindness of God that is expressed is to miss something. Somehow embedded deep into the word "**grace**" is what it cost God to express it. That's how undeserving man was to ever receive it. You must understand that. So all of this that we have at salvation was expressed to us in the beloved. He came and He died a wicked cruel death on the cross so that we might have this grace manifested into our life. We must understand that. It is God's favor freely offered but expensively expressed when He sent His only son into this world. What we have is a result of a holy God reaching down into the filth of this world and sending His son to die for you and me.

Secondly, we find it again in Eph 1:7, "...in Whom...", speaking of Christ, "...we have redemption..."

Do you know what the word redemption means? (Word Study on Redemption). It means that we are purchased. It means to be

purchased off of a slave block. I have not gone into the verse and studied all it is speaking of there. We'll get back to it. But what in the world would cause a God to do that for His creation? You see He is the God. And He is a God of kindness and favor and grace. "...in Him we have redemption through His blood the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace." It mentions His blood. You see you can't take grace away from what it cost God to express it. When you have realized what it cost God to express it, it begins to help you realize the wickedness of sin and the undeserving state of mankind. You think sin is not important? It cost God His only son on the cross. It cost God much suffering to express His grace to you and me.

In Ephesians 2:5 we find the word again, in the middle of a sentence. So let's back up to verse 4. It says, "...but God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in our transgressions made us alive together with Christ..." And then he says, "...by grace you have been saved." He made us alive. He made us alive with Him. He speaks of His resurrection. We are identified with Him in His death, and we are identified with Him in His resurrection. To have a resurrection you must have a death. And there again the word "**grace**" is directly associated with what it cost God to freely express it to mankind.

In chapter 2 and verse 7 we find it. He says, continuing the sentence there that we have already begun in verse 4, "...in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus." "...In the ages to come..." Now I don't know all that that means yet, but one of the thoughts that came to my mind was as long as we live, and we will live eternally, God will continually be revealing to us His grace. We think we understand it. Oh folks, we only understand what God has chosen to reveal to our hearts. But as long as we go "...in the ages to come..." He will be revealing His grace to you and me.

So when you think of the word "**grace**", immediately think of the fact that before Christ we were all dirt and had sin natures that rebelled against God. We are created that way. But as a result of His race, He reached down, and Jesus came into this world. It cost God. Yes, it's free, but it's expensive. There's an enigma there. It was very expensive for God to display something that is free to us.

You know, sometimes we think a little more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. I don't know how many times I have sat up on the pulpit area and seen the crowds come in and had to fight back the tears. I can't imagine why anybody would want to come and hear me. And then it dawns on me that they are not coming to hear me. They're coming to hear God's word. And God overwhelmingly tells me that all the time. Listen, it's by grace I was even saved much less used as a part of His kingdom. How often do we get competitive even in that which only God by His grace has allowed us to participate? I am

afraid sometimes we take grace as a license, and we don't see how undeserving we are of His grace. Don't ever read the word "grace" that you don't realize that you absolutely deserve nothing, and I absolutely deserve nothing.

You want to talk about the grace of God as if it is some kind of divine license that allows us to live even outside the restrictions of God's word? No! Grace, folks, is given to those who absolutely don't deserve anything but hell. And once you have received grace, you never forget that you didn't deserve it to begin with and that now when God transforms you, you live in the mindset of how wonderful this grace is.

I tell you what. When you start understanding, and God starts revealing it to your heart, there is going to be a rejoicing, like I said earlier, that you haven't had before. God is going to put a song in your heart. Some of you even have the garment to praise Him a little bit. And one of these times we are going to see it in a service, and this place is going to go nuts. And I am not telling you to do that. But it's amazing what happens to somebody when it suddenly overwhelms him, and he sees what grace is all about.

Well, in Eph 2:8, Paul says it as he has said it so many times. He says "...for by grace have you been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God..." Paul enters into ministry now and explains how God has lifted us up and saved us all by grace, very expensive grace to God but freely offered to man.

In Eph 3:2, look what it says: "If indeed you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace which was given to me for you..." Paul was talking about his ministry to the Gentiles. The word "stewardship" there is a word that means someone managing the affairs of a household. Here's God over His creation, and He looks down and sees none righteous, no not one. And so the Lord Jesus goes down and says, "I'll become the man. I'll be the God-man." And He goes down, walks in covenant with His father, and the Lord Jesus pays a price, a debt that He didn't owe when we owed a debt we couldn't pay. God lifts us up out of the miry clay, and He sets our feet on the rock. And not only that, He lets us get involved with what He's up to in reaching His creation. To think that He lets us be involved with Him. Paul says, "...this ministry I have to you is by the grace of God." He says at other places, other books, "Man, I am the chief of sinners. I used to crucify Christians. I took them out. I stood there while Stephen was stoned to death. And now I am overwhelmed by the fact that only by God's grace, I don't deserve it, He let me be a part of His ministry." In chapter 3 and verse 7 Paul speaks of his ministry. He says, "...of which I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace which was given to me according to the working of His power."

And then in Eph 3:8 he says, "...to me, the very least of all saints, this grace was given to preach to the Gentiles the unfathomable riches of Christ." Whenever he talks about his ministry or his salvation, he has the word "grace" wrapped all around it. "I didn't deserve for God to stop me on the Damascus road. And I certainly don't deserve for God to use me in the way that he has used me.



It's just by God's grace. God has transformed me. I am no longer the same, and I walk in awe of His grace." Are you living that way? Are you rejoicing in your heart that God loves you like He does? This is the loving-kindness of God. He broke through the darkness of this world with His light, and He sent Jesus to the cross.

In Eph 4:7 Paul speaks of the ministry that all folks have within the body. And he says, "But to each one of us...". You could say, "Brother Wayne, you didn't know me before I got saved. Let me tell you what I was like before I got saved." And you begin to realize how rotten your life really was. "But God broke in, and by His grace I was saved. And now, Wayne, let me tell you how He's gifted me and how I am so grateful that He ministers through me. It's so different."

I was thinking of my wife, Diana, and our gifts. We went to a hospital one time together. We walked in the door, and the little lady started groaning. I picked that up right off. That rascal, she was doing fine when we got there. We walked in, and Diana, with her gift of mercy, runs over, gets her head on her pillow, pats it around and gets it where it's real comfortable. Diana pats her on the cheek and gets her a little glass of water. I am thinking, "Oh come on, Diana. She just wants attention. Let me exhort her." So I walked over and said, "Don't you know the scripture...?" And I started exhorting her in the Word. We got out in the hall, and Diana said, "I can't believe you did that. I would have never done that." The little old lady was just so excited when we left her in the room. I said, "Well, Diana, I would have never done what you did."

It's by God's grace that He even uses us. You see we need that grace because it deals with our sin. Our sin wants to get in the way and be proud of what it is God has given us by grace. We didn't earn it, but we're proud of it. Aren't we? Some people are so proud they have a gift. They love to point to it. How do you know people are proud of their gift? By the way they criticize others because they are not gifted like them.

Manly Beasley is an evangelist who has gone on to be with the Lord. Manly never appeared to be reading the Word when he preached. And so sometimes when people would hear him speak, they would criticize him and say, "Listen to him preach. He doesn't really have an outline. He doesn't have it together. He doesn't mention the Word. He doesn't go into the languages. He doesn't understand." He was dyslexic, and nobody understood that. He couldn't even read it. He saw it backwards every time he looked at it. God used that man in such a powerful way, which proves something to me. Like Paul said when he went to Corinth, he said he didn't come with eloquence of human speech or wisdom, but he just simply come in demonstration of the power of the Holy Spirit of God. What I do I do by the grace of God." Well, **grace** begins by dealing with our sins. There are many more aspects to it, such as ministry and salvation. It covers all the bases. But you've got to understand that sense of not deserving it, or you will never understand the word. God gives it freely, but it was expensive to Him to express it.

Well he mentions another word which has to be in the order that he mentions it. He says, "Grace and peace...". I don't know of a situation, if it is even in the New Testament, where peace ever precedes grace. It can't precede grace. You don't have peace until you receive grace. You have to have grace even to receive it. The word "peace" is the Greek word "[eirene](#)." (Click here for word study on "eirene"; see also Jehovah Shalom) And it means basically the absence of conflict, the absence of any irritant which will interrupt the oneness of a relationship. There is nothing irritating between two things. Man was not at peace with God until God broke through and expressed His grace. And when man received that grace, who the embodiment is the Lord Jesus Himself, he receives God, and God deals with his sin. Therefore, man and God can be at peace with one another. Grace precedes peace. Sin has to be dealt with before man can have God's peace.

Now why would Paul wish the believers, who have already gone through this process, **grace and peace**? He's wishing they had more grace and more peace from God because we're not perfect, folks. Daily we sin, and daily we walk outside the realm of God's grace. It's only by His grace that He convicts us, and we run back. And the grace cleanses us. The power of the blood cleanses us. Then we're back at peace with God, and we're at peace with man.

Look in chapter 2 of Ephesians and let's see what Paul says about this word "peace." In verses 14-17, speaking of Jesus here, Paul says, "...for He Himself is our peace. " Now who's he talking about? "...who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall." The dividing wall he speaks of here is the law. And he speaks of the Jew and the Gentile. He's talking about how when the Lord Jesus came He fulfilled that law. You see, the law to the Jew kept them separate from anybody else on this earth. But when Jesus came He showed them that the Law had condemned every Jew living because there was not a single Jew who could live up to it. But He did. He lived up to it and died on a cross. And now we have life through Him.

We don't enter the kingdom by obeying the law. We enter the kingdom by receiving Jesus Christ. Now once we've done that, in Christ there is no Jew or no Greek. That's what he's talking about. He says Christ is our peace.

**Ephesians 2:15:** by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, 16 and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. 17 AND HE CAME AND PREACHED PEACE TO YOU WHO WERE FAR AWAY, AND PEACE TO THOSE WHO WERE NEAR; (Jews)

In Christ there is no Jew or Greek (Gal 3:28). He is our Peace (Eph 2:14). In other words we ought to always be at peace with one another because through Christ we are at peace with God (Ro 5:1). The problem is a lot of Christians stop living that way. They begin to step outside the realms of God's grace and step outside the realms of God's love. They sin and God reaches out to them. You don't ever really get outside the realms of God's grace, but you step out of the reality of it. And as we sin, God, through His grace, convicts us. We come back. We're cleansed, and we're at one with one another. In verse 2 of Ephesians 1 Paul is wishing for God's grace to be showered upon the faithful believers in Ephesus. He wishes that it be in its fullest form of God's favor, of God's kindness and of God's transforming power that they experience it in every way possible. If some people wish, they can simply call it a greeting. But I think there's a whole lot in that greeting.

I ask you again, do you have joy in your heart?  
Do you rejoice because God loves you & has expressed His grace to you?

The grace of God is available if you'll come and deal with the sin in your life. In that grace is the cleansing power of His blood and in that cleansing the peace comes. Only God can bring it. Jesus said, (Jn 14:27)

"Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Do not let your heart be troubled (agitated, stirred up, made restless, anxious or distressed, experiencing inward commotion that takes away calmness of mind & disturbs one's equanimity), nor let it be fearful"

That's the peace we're looking for. If you are at peace with God, you are at peace with one another.

## EPHESIANS 1:3: A CALL TO PRAISE

by Dr. Wayne Barber

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are at Ephesus and who are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 [Blessed](#) be the [God](#) and [Father](#) of our [Lord Jesus Christ](#), who [has blessed](#) ([AAPMSN](#)) us [with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly](#) places [in Christ](#).

Would you turn with me to Ephesians 1:3. I want to entitle this "A Call to Praise". Paul is writing to the faithful saints in Ephesus, and he with a call to praise. Verses 3-14 comprise one sentence. In those verses we have the picture of the [church](#), how it was redeemed and the rewards for the church one day. The whole Trinity is involved. Let me give you a brief outline. Verses 3-6a look back to the past and speak of God the Father and our election. Verses 6b-11 look at the present and speak of Christ's work on the cross, which affects our redemption. And verses 12-14 look to the future and speak of the work of the Holy Spirit and our inheritance that is to come. It is truly a call to praise.

### People today are burdened down with "self"...

**Self-worth, self-acceptance, self-image.** All these terms. I am sure you've heard that. People are looking for identity. They are looking for something, but they are looking in all the wrong places. What Paul is going to show us in Ephesians is a wonderful truth. As a matter of fact, God has to reveal it to your heart. This is the thing that so frustrates me as a preacher. I may convince you, but I cannot convict you. The Holy Spirit of God has got to turn the light on inside your life. That's what Paul wants for these Ephesians. He wants for them all the self-worth, all the self-image, all the self-acceptance that is found in a right relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ.

Paul wants the Ephesians to understand their position in Christ. That's why you don't jump to Ephesians 6, which deals with warfare. You start with Ephesians 1, which reveals to us through scripture who we are and whose we are in the Lord Jesus Christ. He wants the saints there at Ephesus, the faithful ones, to be enlightened.

If you'll look at verse 18 of chapter 1, this really is the theme of that chapter. He says in 1:18, "I pray that the eyes of your heart will be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints." To understand and to be enlightened he begins by a call to praise. Verse 3 says, "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." Now there are three things that I want us to pull out of verse 3.

First of all, I want us to see the one who should be blessed.

Secondly, I want you to look at the ones who have been blessed.

And then thirdly, we want to look at the blessing that the blessed possess.

### **Let's begin by looking at the One Who should be blessed.**

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"

Now when you deal with the Trinity, it'll blow your mind if you try to understand it. But if you ignore it you'll miss salvation. We know that God is one God in three persons, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. He begins this call to praise by looking to the Father, the first person of the Trinity. And he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." It is obviously God the Father that begins our call to praise. In the phrase "blessed be", notice in your translation the word "be", the little word "be", is in italics. This is what is known as a Hebraism. In other words, it is bringing from one language to another. What the Hebrews would do is leave out the verb. And when the verb is left out it makes something that much more emphatic and that much more absolute. What Paul is saying here when he says, "blessed be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ," is there should never be a time when He is not blessed. This is absolute. There'll never be a time when He does not deserve our praise and does not deserve our blessing.

Let's look at the term for "bless" there. There are three terms in verse 3. The first one found here is [Eulogetos](#). It comes from two Greek words, and draws a picture for us. The word **eu**, means well or good. The word **lego**, means to speak. So what Paul is saying here is God is worthy of our praise. The Father is worthy of our praise. Speak well of Him. To speak well of someone is to praise them. To say, "I bless you, Lord" is the same thing as to say, "I praise you Lord." The Lord is worthy of our praise. The word "bless" there is an adjective, and it describes an attribute of God the Father. He is worthy of our praise.

We saw in verse 2 He is our Father. It says, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ." But I want to share something with you. In this absolute sense that God the Father should eternally be praised, it is not because He is our Father, it is because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. That's why He is eternally to be praised. Now this gets exciting. When you go back to the OT you see that phrase "Blessed be God" or "Blessed is God." They refer to God as the Father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. You see that all through the OT. And so the Hebrews would say "eternally is He to be blessed because He is the Father of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob." But we are of the new covenant, a better covenant. And we come before the Lord to praise Him, and we say, "Oh Father, we praise you. You are worthy to be praised. Not just because you're the Father of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but because you're the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eternally is He to be blessed. Eternally is He to be praised.

The term "[Father](#)" to me is a very precious term because it has to do with the word which means creator, preserver, the governor of all life. But the word, as it talks about the Father, speaks of His loving-kindness and of the care of a Father. Why are we to praise the Father? Because He is the God of love. How do we know that? He's the Father of our Lord

Jesus Christ.

Does it bother you sometimes when Jesus is called the Son of God? The Father, the Son. Now let's be really honest. Do you ever think about the Son, that the word "son" somehow renders Jesus a little bit less than the Father? People are trying to figure out the Trinity. We can't figure it all out. God the Father, God the Son. They're equal.

Philippians 2:6 says of His equality, "who although He existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped."

In other words, He did not have to steal identity with the Father. It was already there. He's equal to the Father. The Son is equal to the Father. That's so hard sometimes for my mind to comprehend. I accept it by faith. I do not fully grasp all of that. Yet He is equal to the Father. Then why is it He came to this earth and submitted to His Father? This is what's difficult sometimes for some people to realize. Why is God the Father to be blessed for all eternity? Because He is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. You mean that Jesus Christ came to this earth and literally submitted to His Father? Yes!

Look in Philippians 2:7 Paul writes that Christ...

emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.."

Maybe this could help some of the confusion. He has always been the Son of God. Always. He's always been there. He came to earth to become the son of man. He took upon Himself a body. It was a perfect sinless body. He lived perfect and sinless on this earth and took our sin upon Himself, but is the God-man. He submitted to His Father, and that was the will of the Trinity so that the cross could be accomplished and man's redemption could be purchased.

So we see a Father who is willing to send His Son into this world so that people that are no more worthy than we are of His grace. And we see the loving-kindness and the reason why for all eternity He deserves to be blessed. What father would send his son to die

for people that are unworthy? Paul said, "Blessed be the God and Father" not of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but "of our Lord Jesus Christ." That should be an eternal worthiness that we understand of Him to be praised. If you want to praise, start with the Father. We're going to deal with the Son and the Holy Spirit as we go through verse 14, but we are beginning with the Father.

## **Secondly, let's look at the ones who have been blessed.**

He says in verse 3

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us".

Now we need to look at this to understand just a little bit of what's going on. There are three different words for "blessed" as we said.

Eulogetos is the adjective which modifies an attribute of God's character. He is worthy to be blessed. But here is the verb [eulogeo](#). It refers to the act of blessing, to act on one's life on their behalf, to do good for them. Here eulogeo is an aorist active participle. Now this is what's important. He has blessed us. What does that phrase mean?

First of all, it's in the **aorist tense** which means it's already done. Aorist tense is completed action. How many times have we come before the Lord and said, "Oh God, will you bless us?" And Paul is saying, "Folks, that is the wrong thing to say. Come before Him and thank Him because He has already blessed us." That's aorist tense-- completed action.

The **active voice** means that the Father is the one that has done the blessing. That is why He deserves eternal praise. He has blessed us in Christ. If it were not for Christ none of the blessings would be there. And then thirdly, it is a participle. A participle is a verbal adjective. In other words, it simply describes what the subject has done. We're speaking of the Father. What has the Father done? Why is He worthy of eternal praise? He is the Father of our Lord Jesus, and He has blessed us. He's already blessed us. Here we see that God has spoken well of us. Now when we bless, we praise. But when God speaks He creates. And what He creates or what He does is good.

Now the one thing we want to ask ourselves is who is Paul writing to? Who is the "us"? He has blessed us. Look in verse 1. "Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God to the saints who are at Ephesus." Now who is he writing to? He's writing to the saints who have been cleansed by the blood, taken up out of the mire of sin, that have been set apart for His use. And he goes on to say, "the faithful in Christ Jesus."

Now, my mind is kind of inquisitive. And so I ask the question, "Do you mean He did not bless the believers who weren't faithful in Christ Jesus?" Oh yes, He blessed them also. It is all resident in Christ Jesus. But why does he make it so imperative that you understand that these are the faithful saints in Ephesus? I think it's this: If a person has not received the grace of God, then when you talk about His blessings it means nothing to them, nothing at all. But listen to this. When that person has been saved by the grace of God but is frustrating that grace and is not seeking after God and not living as God would have him to live, it also frustrates him, and he could care less about how he has been spiritually blessed. When you find a Christian who has been blessed in Christ but is not seeking after Christ, he doesn't want to hear about spiritual blessings. We'll see that in a moment. He wants to know the material blessings and the other things. He has an external outlook. He does not have an eternal outlook. And so Paul says, I am writing this to saints faithful in Christ Jesus. You're the ones who are going to be blessed by what I'm saying. You're the ones who will end up praising the Father because you're the ones who are seeking after the right things.

Many, many times in my life people have come to me and tried to share with me what God has done for me. But if I'm not seeking after the Lord, if I'm not living after Him and don't have a heart for Him, then it means nothing if it is not something I can see, touch, or feel. But brother, when you start seeking after Him and start learning of the blessings God has given to you, that is when it does something to radically change your life. That's when all of a sudden truth begins to be received, and that's when we begin to be set free in our walk. When we're down and looking up that's when the blessings begin to mean something to us.

So the ones who have been blessed are saints, beloved of God. They are the delightful saints, the ones who are seeking after Him, the ones that are faithful in Christ Jesus in Ephesus. He wants them to know about the blessings that God has given already in Christ to all of us. You know, as we go through this one of the prayers that I have is exactly what Paul prayed. I just pray that God will turn a light on inside of you to let you see what has already been done for you in the Lord Jesus Christ. It's already there, folks. It doesn't have to come, it's not something you have to ask for. It has already happened. We've got to learn to appropriate what God has already done.

If you're attending a church and you're saying to yourself, "People here are just not friendly. They don't pay any attention to me. I am going to go someplace else," then you can go from church to church to church to church to church and not find what you're looking for. But if you'll come to Christ, come into the Word of God, you'll realize you have everything you're looking for, it's wrapped up in Jesus Christ. It's spiritual, and it's already been given to those who seek after him. It will radically transform your life. That's the key. We don't seem to understand that coming to church, to the organization, or to the programs means little in eternity. What I'm trying

to get you to is a person, a person. It's in Him that you have every spiritual blessing on this earth.

Who are the ones who have been blessed? The saints. Who are the ones who appreciate that message? The faithful ones in Christ Jesus. If you're not faithful, you're not seeking after Him. I don't mean perfect, but if you're not seeking after that which God offers then this means little to you because you're saying, "It doesn't pay my bills." And you're looking at it externally, and you're overlooking what is internal in your life. There are a lot of Christians still trying to get what they already have. They are chasing after something they already have. Like Manly Beasley said, "We're trying to get into a room we're already in." He has already blessed us, and Paul says, "Praise the God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has already given us the blessings in Him." When you understand what God's done for you, one of these days it's going to make you stand up and shout.

### **Thirdly, and finally, let's look at the blessings that the blessed possess.**

"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."

**"Every spiritual blessing"** Now if this is God's Word, it's God's Word, and it ought to become a standard for all of us. Look at this. Take it apart. The word "every", *pas*, in the Greek, means each and every one and then the whole of it when you finally see it. Now I don't see the whole blessing of God right now. But I know that I have it all in Christ Jesus. In other words, not one single blessing has been left out. It's already been given me in Christ Jesus. Now let me ask you a question. People come up to you and they say, "Oh brother, have you had the second blessing?" What does God say? You have every, every blessing in Christ. Maybe it hasn't hit you yet what you got when you got the Lord Jesus Christ. I don't need the second. I don't need the third. I got them all, resident in Him. Why should I be seeking it anywhere else, in an experience or someplace else? It's in Him, and that becomes very important to us in just a moment.

Let's move on in the verse. "with every spiritual blessing". Now that's why he writes to the faithful ones. Like I said, they enjoy this, but people who aren't spiritual or seeking after God could care less because they are looking for the external blessings of this world. "Spiritual," *pneumatikos*, refers to that which is communicated or imparted by the Holy Spirit of God. "You mean I already have that?" You already have that, not so much in realization, but you have it in the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, "every spiritual blessing." Now here's the third word for blessing in this verse. They are all in the same family. *Eulogetos* is the word that is an adjective which we saw first. **"Blessed** be the God and Father.. .who has **blessed** us," That is *eulogeo*. And now it's *eulogia*, "with every spiritual **blessing**" The word here means a favor, a gift. But I think there are two better meanings. One is benefit. When you think of a blessing, a favor, you think of something that is beneficial. But not only beneficial, there's another meaning for the word that is translated that way: the advantage, spiritual advantage. Every spiritual advantage and benefit is ours in Christ Jesus. We're in a spiritual war, as we're going to see in Chapter 6. What does this tell you? Before you ever get to that war, you've got every spiritual advantage and benefit that is resident in Christ Jesus. "with every spiritual blessing."

Now look at this. Where are they located? "in the heavenly places" That means in the heavenlies. The Greek word is *epouranos*, which refers to that which pertains to heaven. The antonym tells you more than actually the word itself because the antonym shows you what it's not. Many times you learn what something is by seeing what it's not. The antonym is *epigeios*, which pertains to earthly things. Here Paul just backs it up one more time. He didn't give us every material blessing in Christ. That's the old covenant. That's Israel. They had land. They had health, all these things. But that ends. That's temporary. He gave us every spiritual blessing. And where do they reside? They reside in the heavenlies. These benefits, these advantages are not something that are earthly. These benefits, these advantages are of something that is heavenly.

## **IN CHRIST**

Now where? **"in Christ"** Christ is the anointed name, the Messiah name, the resurrection name. It's **"in Christ (onsite study)"**. Implied in that is what He had to do before these blessings could ever be ours and how we had to respond before He could be in our life. And now resident in Him are those blessings. If I am not walking in cooperation with Him I have no realization of what's mine that is resident in Him. In other words, it has to be a life of seeking and obedience before realizing these things become real to me in my daily walk, moment by moment. He says there are spiritual blessings resident in the heavenlies and in Christ. And it has everything to do with that which is internal and eternal. Material or physical or tangible things are thrown in. That's in addition. But what He promises here is what is spiritual. What is so great about having spiritual blessings as opposed to material blessings? I've thought about this.

### **Why is it so wonderful that He has given us these spiritual blessings?**

**First of all, they never change.** What does that mean? Well, anything tangible, anything material or physical changes because your needs change.

Years ago in my life to get a brand new basketball would have been a great blessing. When I grew up we had hand-me-down [used] basketballs from some neighborhood kid. I had a basketball goal on a tree outside, but it was a blessing to get a basketball. I would have said to you, "I have been blessed. I got a basketball." But that was years ago. You can give me a brand new basketball, but something changed about me. That's not as big a blessing as it used to be. That's the way tangible things are. That's how material things are. They change. But spiritual blessings never change. Nor does our need for them change. Look at Ephesians 1:7. He's going to give us a list of these blessings.

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace."

That's why when somebody comes and says, "I want my marriage back together," that's not the blessing you're looking for. What you're looking for is the grace to deal with the sin that got the marriage in the problem to begin with. The mercy and those things are eternal, they never change. But your marriage is always subject to change. What you're really looking for is to know that you are back right with God when you've made mistakes and failures in your life. That's what He gives us in Christ Jesus. That's what the world is starving for. Our government and the secular world are trying to meet needs with tangible things. You can't do it. God has promised us spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus. And that's the basic of needs of all mankind. They never change.

### **Secondly, they are not subject to time or space**

They operate in the sphere of heaven where God is. He oversees them. I love that. He makes sure to it. He is the divine administrator of all these things. There's the presence of God.

### **Thirdly, their source is Christ.**

That tells me that they are pure. They're perfect. They're exactly what I need. That's what spiritual blessings are. You can't buy something that is material that fits your need. But that which is spiritual is perfect because it's perfect and pure.

### **Fourthly, they're free.**

What collateral could a man give for spiritual blessings? We can never earn them.

### **Fifthly, they are gracious.**

Man is never worthy to receive them. This is the beautiful thing. Let me show you something, will you? If you're discouraged, you've failed, you've blown your life away, your blessings are still in Christ Jesus. What you have done since then doesn't make any difference. If you'll come back to Him and bow to Him, those blessings are yours right now if you want. That's the beautiful thing about what he's saying here. It's not as if you can fail and miss out on the blessings. Well maybe in realization, but they're still all yours, resident in Christ.

I don't know how many times I have had to speak maybe just a few hours after I have done something horrific in what I have said or thought. Sometimes I have said things to Diana or to my son or to my daughter or somebody else in this world, fleshly, carnal thoughts or words, and had to stand up and preach. I tell you what it will do to you in a hurry. It will teach you these gifts are gracious, and when I come and confess my sin immediately the joy can be restored because it's already there. Now there are certain things I must do sometimes to come to Him to repent and receive the cleansing. I understand that. But it hasn't taken away from a single blessing. They've already been given, and they're in Christ Jesus. And the moment I am ready to come back to Him and humble myself before Him, that's the very moment I begin to realize that which He has already given me in Christ Jesus.

I was home with my mother when she had leukemia, for a week years ago when she died. My sister lived there in the same city. I was just the world's worse person to be with that week. I was not nice at all to my sister. She had a lot of problems, but I didn't take that into consideration. She hadn't visited my mother every day, hadn't stayed with her, and I was just down on her. And every time she would say something I would cut her short. That's not like me, but at the same time that's what my flesh is like.

At the end of that week I left, got on the plane, sick of the whole mess. I got into Atlanta, and as I was sitting there God began to move over me. I began to feel the conviction of what I had done. But you know, right on top of conviction sometimes the devil turns it into condemnation. And it was just like he was walking up in front of me and saying, "You louse, you sorry rat." It was a Saturday. "You're going to preach tomorrow. You louse. You realize what you've done all week long. You louse. You don't hold the truth. You don't live the truth." And the devil was just accusing me and accusing me.

As I sat there tears welled up in my eyes. I don't know how God speaks to you when you sin, but I've got to do something. I mean it just makes me feel like I've been kicked right in my chest. I've got to do something to get it right, and I didn't know what. As I was sitting there a verse came to me. It was that verse that says, "in that while you were yet a sinner Christ died for you." I began to realize God loved me in spite of what I had done, and everything that had been given me in Christ Jesus was still there. The problem was I had walked away from it. And if I would just come right back and confess, be cleansed by the blood of Jesus, repent of my

attitude, surrender and open my arms back to Him, everything that had been given would still there. Nothing is taken away, and all the blessings are still resident in Him.

I don't know if that says anything to you or not. Material blessings aren't that way. Spiritual blessings are that way. They are resident in Christ Jesus. Everything you have is in a person, and His name is Jesus. And if you'll come to Him and bow down to Him, you're going to start realizing inwardly what you've been looking for all along. The key is that repentant heart. When you are ready to bow, at that very moment, you become accessible to the things that are yours in Christ Jesus. They're all available, as Paul says in the verse, in Christ. The problem with most of us is, we look for it in everything except where it is found.

Sometimes I go home and say, "Diana, how did the message go?" I love it when she says, "AH, that was great!" That's all I need. I don't need it from anyone else, just from Diana. I know she will tell me the truth. Some days I go home and I ask, "How did it go?" She'll talk about the weather, other things. It doesn't take me long to figure out what's going on. And I'll say, "It didn't go across too good, did it?" She'll say, "Wayne, let me ask you a question. Do you get your acceptance out of how well you preach or do you find it in simply pleasing the Lord Jesus?" She told me one day, "You know, sometimes I might have been in a mood in which I wasn't ready to hear it. So you shouldn't have asked me. Ask Him, and if you pleased Him that's where your acceptance is to start with. It's not with other people." Oh folks, if we could just see that. "Praise the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ Jesus." Spiritual things, that's what we're looking for because we're spiritual people. And if we don't have our needs met spiritually in Christ, they'll never be met anywhere *else*. *That's the key.*