

***“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” – Ephesians 1:3***

- I. **The apostle Paul begins his letter by telling us that as believers we have been “...blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ”**
  - a. **The moment we accepted the Lord Jesus into our hearts, we were born rich into the family of God**
    - i. In Christ, we have received every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places...
    - ii. In Christ, we have received all the treasures, wealth, and riches of the heavenlies...
    - iii. Therefore, because of this, we can confidently and boldly say, “*As believers we are blessed – I am blessed*”
  - b. **In spite of the condition of the economy, in spite of our position at work, in spite of the balance in our checking account, we are blessed, so very blessed**
    - i. In Christ, God the Father has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places – Amen!
    - ii. All the riches in the world are merely *pennies* when compared with all the spiritual riches we have been given in Christ Jesus
    - iii. You see, the riches of this world are temporal, one day they will fade away, however, the spiritual riches found in Christ are eternal, they will never fade away...
    - iv. They can never be taking away from us; they can never go bankrupt; they can never be laid off, used up, fired, or liquidated
  - c. **In Christ, we have been blessed with all the spiritual blessings and riches in the Heavenly places, and these blessings and riches are not going anywhere**
    - i. Maybe the world’s economy is not doing too good, but God’s economy is doing just fine...
    - ii. And this morning, I want to talk about some of the spiritual blessings and riches believers have been given in Christ
    - iii. In the midst of a failing economy, it is so important that we are reminded of the spiritual wealth and riches we have in Christ
  - d. **Therefore, please turn with me to *\*Romans Chapter 5\** and let’s take a look at some of the spiritual blessings we have in Christ**
    - i. In **Romans Chapter 5**, beginning in vs. *1* thru *11*, the apostle Paul mentions ***eight spiritual blessings*** all believers have received in Christ
    - ii. Eight spiritual blessings, or benefits, that belong to all those who have placed their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus Christ
    - iii. If you have been justified by faith, these *spiritual blessings* apply to you

- e. Now, this morning, we are going to examine the first four spiritual blessings mentioned by Paul, and next week, we will look at the final four

## II. 1<sup>st</sup> – “Peace with God” (Vs. 1)

- a. In verse 1, the apostle Paul declares, “Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ”
  - i. The first spiritual blessing the apostle Paul tells us that we have received in Christ is “***Peace with God***”
  - ii. Through the Lord Jesus, we are able to have peace with God...
  - iii. Now, this is important, because prior to having peace with God, the Bible tells us that we were at ***enmity*** and ***war*** with God
- b. Before coming to Christ, we were all “Enemies of God” fighting a war which we would have never won (\*we were destined for defeat and destruction\*)
  - i. Now, this is not a popular topic, or theme, today, however, this is exactly what the Bible teaches us (\****People don’t want to hear this\****)
  - ii. **Romans 8:7** declares, “***Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be***”
  - iii. **James 4:4** declares, “***Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God***”
- c. Therefore, at one time we were at enmity with God, enemies against God, but now, through the Lord Jesus, we are able to experience peace with God
  - i. The Lord Jesus has caused the war to end; He has signed the peace treaty with His own blood
  - ii. **Colossians 1:19-20** declares, “***For it pleased the Father that in Him all the fullness should dwell, and by Him to reconcile all things to Himself, by Him, whether things on earth or things in heaving, having made peace through the blood of His cross***”
  - iii. At the Cross, the Lord Jesus satisfied the wrath of God, and now, we are able to experience peace with God through Him
- d. The world is looking for the solution to world peace, yet in Jesus Christ, we have the solution for peace where we need it the most – “With God”
  - i. And this is the message we have been called to proclaim to the world, as Ambassadors of Christ, we proclaim, “***The Gospel of Peace***”
  - ii. **Romans 10:15b** declares, “***...how beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things***”
  - iii. People need to hear that through the cross of Jesus Christ the war with God is over – “***Listen up, I have good news, the war is over!***”
- e. Now, once we experience peace with God, then, we can experience the peace of God (\*Only in that Order\*)

- i. You can't experience the peace of God until you bow your heart to the Prince of Peace – Jesus Christ
- ii. **St. Augustine** declared, *“God has made us for Himself, and our hearts can find no peace until they rest in Him.”*
- iii. Everyone is searching for peace – *“Where can I find peace? Peace for my family, my marriage, my children, my self – I need peace!”*
- iv. Yet, the Bible gives us the answer, only in Christ can we experience unchanging, unfailing, perfect, divine peace – He is all you need...
- v. In **John 14:27**, the Lord Jesus declared, *“Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid”*
- f. Therefore, the first spiritual blessing that Paul tells us that we have received in Christ is “Peace with God,” and because of this, the “Peace of God”

### III. 2<sup>nd</sup> – “Access to the Grace of God”

- a. In verse 2a, the apostle Paul continues by declaring, “through whom also we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand...”
  - i. The second spiritual blessing the apostle Paul tells us that we have received in Christ is *“Access to the Grace of God”*
  - ii. Through the Lord Jesus, we have been granted access into the grace of God (\*Access carries the idea of “the right, or freedom, to enter”\*)
  - iii. In Christ, we have been granted the right and freedom to enter into the unmerited, undeserved, unearned favor of God
  - iv. Jesus has opened the floodgates of heaven wide open for us to experience the grace and favor of God – “What a Blessing!”
  - v. **John 1:17** declares, *“For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ”*
- b. Now, because we have been granted access into the grace of God, we must make sure that we continue to stand in His grace (\*Don't move from it\*)
  - i. You see, often times, Christians begin in the grace of God, but over time, they began to move towards the works of the flesh
  - ii. They say to themselves, *“If I do this, then God will do this...”* – Instead of resting in Christ, they try to win God's favor with works...
  - iii. However, there is nothing we can do to win God's favor or approval, all we are asked to do is rest in the finished work of Christ
- c. Therefore, because of this, we must continue to stand in the grace of God – “God's grace is a good place to be in!”
  - i. You see, the Bible teaches us in **2 Corinthians 12:9** that God's grace is sufficient for all things – God's grace is enough...
  - ii. **Sufficient for Salvation** – *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God”* – **Ephesians 2:8**

- iii. **Sufficient for Obedience** – *“Through Him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith...”* – Romans 1:5a
- iv. **Sufficient for Strength** – *“You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus”* – 2 Timothy 2:1
- v. **Sufficient to Serve God** – *“...let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear”* – Hebrews 12:28b
- d. **From beginning to end, the Christian walk is all about the grace of God – the amazing grace of God – “Have you experienced God’s grace?”**
  - i. Therefore, the second spiritual blessing that Paul tells us that we have received in Christ is *“Access to the Grace of God”*

#### IV. **3<sup>rd</sup> – “The Ability to Rejoice in Hope of Eternity”**

- a. **In verse 2b, the apostle Paul continues by declaring, “...and rejoice in hope of the glory of God”**
  - i. The third spiritual blessing the apostle Paul tells us that we have received in Christ is *“The Ability to Rejoice in Hope of Eternity”*
  - ii. Because we have received Christ into our hearts, we have the certainty that one day we will experience the glory of God
  - iii. One day, we will see the Lord Jesus face to face, we will see Him in all His glory, splendor, majesty, and beauty
  - iv. One day, we will be in His presence for all of eternity, we will be in the company of the four-living creatures, the seraphim, and the cherubim crying out, *“Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord God Almighty...”*
  - v. One day, we will be in Heaven with all the loved ones and great saints who have gone before us – *“I will see my Mom!”*
- b. **And because of this, we rejoice, “we rejoice in hope of the glory of God”**
  - i. **Revelation 21:4a** declares, *“And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain...”*
  - ii. One day, all the suffering, all the tears, all the pain, all the trials, all the fears, all the burdens, all the struggles of this world will be no more
  - iii. One day, it will all be finished, and it will all be worth it...
  - iv. **Romans 8:18** declares, *“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us”*
- c. **One day, it will all be finished, however, until that day comes, we must continue fighting the good fight of the faith – “Keep Living for Jesus Christ”**
  - i. Brother, don’t lose sight of eternity because one day you are going to step into eternity, and on that day, you don’t want to have any regrets...
  - ii. Therefore, the third spiritual blessing that Paul tells us that we have received in Christ is *“The Ability to Rejoice in Hope of Eternity”*

V. 4<sup>th</sup> – “The Ability to Glory in Tribulations”

- a. In verses 3-4, the apostle Paul continues by declaring, “And not only that, but we also glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character, and character, hope”
  - i. The fourth spiritual blessing the apostle Paul tells us that we have received in Christ is “*The Ability to Glory in Tribulations*”
  - ii. Believers are able to glory in tribulations because they understand that God is working out His plans and purposes for their lives through them
  - iii. God uses the times of trials, sufferings, and pain to form Christian character within our lives – to make us more like His Son (\*important\*)
  - iv. Therefore, we can glory in times of tribulation, because we know that God is using it for the good – He is preparing us for the future...
- b. Turn with me to \*1 Chronicles 11:22-24\* and let’s read it together
  - i. In **1 Chronicles 11**, we are introduced to a mighty warrior by the name of “*Benaiah the Son of Jehoaida*”
  - ii. The Bible tells us that this great and mighty warrior killed two lion like heroes of Moab – this would have been a great victory for Israel...
  - iii. However, right after this great victory, the Bible tells us that Benaiah found himself in a horrible pit on a snowy day with a lion
  - iv. Benaiah went from experiencing a great and mighty victory to finding himself in a horrible pit...
- c. And maybe, like Benaiah, you find yourself in a pit this morning – spiritually, emotionally, physically, or financially, you are in a horrible pit
  - i. Well, if that is you, I would simply tell you to take courage because God is going to use that pit to prepare you for something great in the future...
  - ii. You see, the Bible tells us that after Benaiah killed the lion in the pit, he was confronted by a a mighty warrior from Egypt
  - iii. However, because of his time in the pit, Benaiah was prepared to do battle with the Egyptian Giant, and Benaiah killed the Giant
- d. The pit had prepared Benaiah for his confrontation with the Egyptian Giant...
  - i. And it is the same with us, God uses the time of suffering and pain to prepare us for the future – to prepare us for the Giants we will face...
  - ii. And when the Giants come, we will not fear, but like Benaiah, we will be fully prepared for battle and have the victory
- e. Therefore, as believers we can glory in tribulations, because we understand that God is doing a marvelous work in our lives during difficult times (purpose)

VI. Therefore, you can see why in Christ we can confidently say, “I am blessed; I am blessed; I am blessed”

- a. We have been given peace with God, access into the grace of God, the ability to rejoice in hope of eternity, and the ability to glory in tribulations...

- i. If you have never experienced these blessings, this morning, I invite you to accept Christ into your life and understand what it means to be blessed