**Ephesians 3 – Over these next 8 weeks I want us to go on a treasure hunt together to find and discover our ultimate treasure – the treasure house of GLORY – the Triune God of Grace – our three in one God – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit as he reveals himself to us in his Word!**

**one of the great glories of God’s Word is there seems to be no end to the depths of revelation and knowledge that can be mined from it – Ephesians is truly the source of many of the greatest treasures that I have ever found in the Bible**

**Our primary goal is not just to find and discover the great treasures of truth in Ephesians but to walk in them –**

**Not only do we want to find and Encounter Him as our ultimate treasure but also to be his Treasure - What makes something a treasure is it’s worth and value – it is either rare or hard to find – if we could spend our entire lives to bring our King pleasure even for just a single moment it would have been a life of such glorious success that no amount of earthly treasure could ever compare to it –**

**As Jesus shared in one of his parables of the kingdom in**

Matthew 13:44, “The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field”

Ephesians 1:7 (ESV), “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”

Ephesians 1:18 (ESV), “having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints”

Ephesians 2:4 (ESV), “But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us”

Ephesians 2:7 (ESV), “so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus”

Ephesians 3:8 (ESV), “To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”

Ephesians 3:16 (ESV), “that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being”

**He is our ultimate treasure but what we will discover in Ephesians is that we are also his treasure – in this parable this man is also the Lord Jesus who came from heaven searching, he found us and in his joy over us as the treasure he sells everything at the cross to purchase us as his own! And it’s pursuit of us, his love over us, his extravagant joy over us as his treasure even in our weakness that motivates us to pursue him and to encounter him … ah the riches of his GRACE - SHEER GRACE –**

**Let me give you one gold nugget from Pauls’ prayer in Ephesians 3 and then let’s commit this class in prayer together**

Ephesians 3:14–19 (ESV), “For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, 15 from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, 16 that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17 so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, 18 may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, 19 and to **know** the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, (SO) **that you may be filled with all the fullness of God”**

Ephesians 1:1 (ESV), “Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus”

Paul wrote the letter to the Ephesians sometime in AD 61-62 AD, around the same time he wrote Colossians and Philemon, as he sent all three letters by the hand of Tychicus, accompanied by Onesimus ([Ephesians 6:21](https://biblia.com/bible/nlt/Eph%206.21); [Colossians 4:7–9](https://biblia.com/bible/nlt/Col%204.7%E2%80%939); [Philemon 1:10–12](https://biblia.com/bible/nlt/Philem%201.10%E2%80%9312)). It was during this time that Paul sat in Rome undergoing his first Roman imprisonment ([Ephesians 3:1](https://biblia.com/bible/nlt/Eph%203.1); [4:1](https://biblia.com/bible/nlt/Ephesians%204.1)), making Ephesians one of the four epistles commonly known as the Prison Epistles. The others are Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon.

Some of the original manuscripts don’t have the little phrase – in Ephesus – scholars have different opinions on this but I believe Pauls’ original letter – his first manuscript if you will was addressed to Ephesus – he sent the original letter to his friends and leaders at Ephesus – but people quickly realized that although Paul was writing to a specific people of that specific church in that specific city he was also speaking more widely to all the churches in the areas around ephesus and this explains why unlike Paul’s other letters he does not greet people by name and is not addressing any particular problem – this letter is written to you in your city and your context – as he says to all the saints who are faithful in Christ Jesus!

**Introduction to Paul and Ephesus**

At Paul’s birth he was given the name Saul, in honor of Israel’s first king. He was born in the first century, a few years after the birth of Jesus of Nazareth, to Jewish parents who happened to also be Roman citizens. Paul was born in the city of Tarsus, in an area that is now modern-day Turkey. Tarsus was a ‘university town’ known as a center of learning. It was a multi-cultural, multi-racial, multi-religion city. Jews, Greeks, and Romans all lived, worked and worshipped there. In the early years of the first century, Tarsus had a population of nearly 500,000, which means that from the beginning of his life, Saul lived and worked in an urban/city world. Paul understood the urban world!

At some point in his late childhood, Paul’s family moved to Jerusalem, or at least, they made many long-term visits to the Holy City. In Jerusalem, Saul becomes a student of the Rabbi Gamaliel (Acts 5:33-42, 22:3), grandson and successor of Rabbi Hillel (60 BC – 20 AD), one of Judaism’s greatest thinkers and teachers. Saul was an excellent student, rising in the ranks of the scholarly Pharisees. He was in such a high position that when the first Christians were brought to trial, Saul was in a position to be able to cast votes for their punishment (Acts 26:10).

It is important to realize that Saul’s first response to the gospel of Jesus Christ was horror, not belief or joy. The Messiah crucified? No way! Heresy! Blasphemy! And then risen from the dead? Nonsense! So problematic did he find the gospel that he decided it must be stamped out. Those who preached such ‘blasphemy’ and ‘nonsense’ must be destroyed.

He was on his way to the city of Damascus to arrest disciples of ‘The Way’ and bring them back to Jerusalem for trial and then punishment. Luke, the medical doctor, tells the story in his Acts of the Apostles. Around noon one day, “suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him” (Acts 9:3). Saul fell to the ground. And he heard a voice saying to him, ‘Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?” (Acts 9:4). “Who are you, Lord?” Saul cried out. And the voice says, “I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting” (Acts 9:5). And Saul became Paul, one of the greatest of all Christian thinkers and missionaries.

In that Damascus encounter, Paul discovered grace. This is why the theme of grace is so prominent in this letter to the Ephesians – Paul had hated the name Jesus. He hated all who named the name Jesus. He was trying to erase the name from the pages of history. And yet, Jesus chose to love Paul; Jesus chose to love this man, to make Paul one of His chosen ambassadors (Eph. 6:20). Grace… Sheer Grace!

In that Damascus encounter, Paul discovered that Jesus is alive; the crucified One really is alive. The news from Jerusalem’s cemetery was not nonsense: Jesus is Risen! Paul discovered that Jesus is, therefore, Lord. In fact Paul’s first word to Jesus is “Lord.” Paul knew the meaning of the word he used: *Kurios*. The word was used to refer to Rome’s Emperor, Caesar. *Kurios*, Lord: Jesus is Lord.

In that encounter, Paul discovered the wonder of being the church, “Why are you persecuting me?” Jesus asks him. Was Paul persecuting Jesus? He was threatening and harming disciples of Jesus. But, Jesus? Yes! What we do to Jesus’ disciples, we somehow do to Jesus. Jesus’ disciples make up Jesus’ body in the world. What we do to Jesus’ body, we do to Jesus. This letter to the Ephesians gives us the grand vision of the glorious purpose of the church to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, Christ Jesus himself!

From that day on the Damascus Road, Paul was a Jesus-captured man, a Jesus- apprehended man, a Jesus-enthralled man (Phil 3:7-14). And from that day, Paul was a Jesus-sent man.

Paul introduced himself the rest of his life as “Paul, an apostle of Messiah Jesus.” The word apostle meant, ‘sent one - one authorized by the sender to speak on his behalf.’ Paul the persecutor, the terrorist, becomes one sent by the *Kurios*, to speak the Messiah’s message to the world.

**Ephesus**

Ephesus was located almost four kilometers inland from the Aegean Sea, on the west coast of modern Turkey. Years before, it had been a seaport, but over the decades, silt from the Cayster river slowly forced people to move inland. At the time when the gospel arrived in Ephesus, it had a population between 225,000 – 250,000. From the beginning of the Christian era, believers have lived the gospel in urban centers.

Ephesus was called, ‘the first and grandest metropolis of Asia,’ ranking in importance in the Empire only behind Athens and Rome. It was the largest trading centre in Asia Minor, largely due to the fact that it was situated along major shipping routes. The so-called ‘Royal Road,’ linking East and West, went through the city bringing people from all over the world – people with all kinds of differing philosophical and religious perspectives. This city had a fabulous theatre, with a seating capacity of 24,000. It was so acoustically engineered that a speaker standing at a particular spot on the stage need only whisper to be heard by all 24,000.

The city also had a massive temple, built for the worship of the goddess Artemis, as the Greeks called her, or Diana, as the Romans called her. She was the goddess of sexual fertility, represented by a statue with many breasts. Her temple was larger than any modern-day football field and was four times larger than the Parthenon in Athens. It was the “largest building known in antiquity and was considered one of the seven wonders of the world.”[[1]](#footnote-1)

Life in Ephesus ‘revolved around’ the temple of Artemis, who was spoken of as the ‘wife of Ephesus, the protectress and nourisher of the city.’[[2]](#footnote-2) Maybe this is one reason why Paul speaks so much of ‘temple’ in his letter to the Ephesians? And maybe part of the reason why he speaks of the relationship between Jesus and his church in terms of a husband and a wife?

Ephesus was especially known as a center for magical practices. The city was “obsessed with demons and magic.”[[3]](#footnote-3) People, therefore, spoke a lot about spiritual power. Indeed, the goddess Artemis was thought to be one of the most powerful of all deities and was sought out for defense against other opposing ‘powers’ and ‘spirits.’ Maybe this is why Paul speaks of ‘principalities powers’ in his letter to Ephesians?

Ephesians 1:18-19, “having the eyes of your hearts enlightened, that you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might that he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”

“Our struggle,” he reminds the Ephesians, “is not against flesh and blood,” not against other human beings, “but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the special forces of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph 6:12).

Ephesus was also the proud center of the so-called ‘Imperial Cult,’ the worship of the Roman Emperor. Worship of Caesar as a god was the glue that held society together; it permeated all levels of society.[[4]](#footnote-4) The city constructed another temple (between 11-13 AD) and dedicated it to the ‘Emperor Caesar Augustus, son of god’ who was worshipped as the warrior god who had imposed unity and order on the world. The rule of Augustus was thought to be so significant that the calendar needed to be changed. In 9BC, the Ephesian City Council voted to change the calendar to begin on Augustus’ birthday. It was claimed that Augustus had ended the time of suffering, and a city proconsul announced that Augustus had “restored the form of all things to usefulness.”[[5]](#footnote-5) The decree spoke of Augustus as a ‘savior,’ *soter* and as a ‘god,’ *theos*.

And his birthday was the ‘beginning of good tidings to the world.’ The word ‘good tidings’ is *euangelion*, or *evangel*, which we refer to in English as ‘gospel.’

However the people in Ephesus who came to faith in Jesus Christ will have a new understanding of ‘gospel’ a different ‘glad tidings.’ They will have a new understanding of power and authority, unity, and time.’

**Paul and Ephesus**

Paul lived and served in Ephesus on two different occasions. The first time in 52 AD was quite brief (Acts 18:19-21). The second time 53-56 AD lasted about two and half years (Acts 19:1-22; 20:31). At first Paul taught and dialogued in the synagogue (Acts 19:8). But when he began to come up against ‘hardened hearts,” Paul worked out of ‘the school of Tyrannus’ (Acts 19:9). Apparently one of the Ephesian philosophers did not need his meeting room part of the day, and made it available to Paul. Luke tells us that Paul met with people in the Hall of Tyrannus, teaching every day for over two years. Paul worked as tent-maker in the heart of the city and then during the siesta (rest time) each day he would teach and disciple through the Scriptures.

During his 2.5 years stay in the city, many people were won to Jesus and His gospel. As a sign of their genuine conversion and intent to be Jesus’ disciples, people broke with the Ephesian obsession with magic and the occult. Many brought their magic and occult books and burned them in the public square. Luke says that they counted up the price of the books (equivalent in todays wages about 10,000,000 – quite a bonfire)! **The gospel always starts confronting the idols of the day around which a city revolves.**

Paul then left Ephesus. Two years later, he ended up in jail and lived as a prisoner for five years, first in Caesarea on the coast of Syria, and then, after a harrowing trip by sea, in Rome. From Rome, in 62 AD, Paul writes in his letter to the Ephesians, “I Paul, the prisoner of Christ Jesus for the sake of you Gentiles” (Eph. 3:1). “Therefore I, the prisoner of the Lord, implore you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called” (Ephesians 4:1). Paul does not call himself a “prisoner of Caesar,’ but a ‘prisoner of the Lord, of Messiah Jesus.’

L**esson from Rev. 2:4-5, “**But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first. 5 Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place, unless you repent”

We love God because he first loved us -

Ephesians 1:2 (ESV), “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ”

Let’s spend a few moments discussing this remarkable benediction that is speaking grace and peace into the lives of the church - at the very beginning grace to you and peace to you from God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. In every one of Paul's letters, it begins with grace and peace to you, and at the end it becomes grace with be **with** you. And I suggest that the reason it's **to you** at the beginning of the letter is that in the letter itself, Paul believes grace and peace are flowing from him through his word, from God to the church. And then when they're done and they get ready to leave the church where the letter has been read and go out into their lives, they go **with grace** – practically for us – the grace of God flows from the Word of God and is why we need to continually be in the Word of God!

Let's focus first on grace and how the Father and the Lord Jesus team up to do **grace** in this letter. Grace is undeserved favor - affection and power – it is what inclines God to give gifts that are free and undeserved by sinners. Grace is that quality in God that produces free gifts for guilty sinners in salvation. you can’t work to earn grace. It is free and undeserved and it is given at Christ’s expense … but grace is also power or an influence for obedience. His grace compels us – it moves us and influences us towards obedience!

**Ephesians 2:4-8** SLIDE

but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses. So that love – given even when we are dead - undeserving in the bondage of trespasses. He made us alive together with Christ. And then he inserts by grace, you have been saved - He inserts it here and thus shows that grace is God dealing with us infinitely better than we deserve indeed so powerfully better than we deserve, that it involves raising us from the spiritual death where we could not begin to help ourselves.

And he raised us up with him and seeded us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus. So that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable **riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus**. So all of this amazing grace raising us from the dead, doing what we could NOT do for ourselves was aimed at celebrating this grace forever and ever as he lavishes it upon us in eternal ages.

Now lets’ go back to chapter 1 to see the ultimate goal of the glorifying of grace. Again, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing. So the Father blesses us in Christ – he is the source of the blessings, and Christ is the mediator with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him.

God is The choosing one before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him in love. He predestined us for adoption. That's what a father wants to do. He wants children to himself as sons through Jesus Christ. Again,Jesus is the mediator according to the purpose of his will. Now, what's the purpose of all of that election? Adoption to the praise of the glory of his grace. The riches of his grace that he lavished upon us … So grace is massively central in this letter, everything in all of history, all of redemption is to praise, praise the glory of grace. It's not surprising then that in the beginning here he says, grace to you, therefore give thanks always for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. So the Father is the origin, the source of all good, and it all flows through Jesus Christ. So that thanks go backwards through Jesus Christ to God the Father.

Now we turn to peace, chapter two, verse 14. For Christ himself is our peace who has made us both one (Jew and Gentile), he has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility and replaced it with peace by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances that he might create in himself one new man - So making peace he might reconcile. Peace, the removal of hostility and now he might reconcile us both to God … So this is vertical peacemaking reconciling us both to God through the cross. We were alienated from God and alienated from each other. And God in Christ the Lord Jesus makes peace vertically and he makes peace horizontally between people who are in Christ Jesus.

He came and preached peace to you who are far off, that's Gentiles and peace to those who were near, that's Jews. And he did it to create peace with God, no condemnation and thus peace with each other in Christ Jesus. So grace, massive in this letter, peace, massive in this letter and both of them flowing from God, the Father through the mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**Blessing …**

Ephesians 1:3 (ESV), “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing”

The word bless means every joy and every benefit that your heart and soul need and long

God is intensely concerned to bless his people. Blessing is God’s idea, it is not something we have to beg for, it is something that he desires to give. He is the one who is always there for you and all that he has he places at your disposal … In his wisdom God knows what’s best for us, in his love he wants what’s best for us, and in his power he delivers what is best for us!

Every word in the worship vocabulary of the Bible has a particular nuance involving actions of the body. “Bless” involves the hands and the knees. The Greek word for bless is used to translate the Hebrew word *barach*, a word involving the posture of kneeling. To bless is to bring a gift to another while kneeling out of respect. To ‘bless’ means to come before another, go down on one’s knees, stretch out one’s hands and offer a gift. To ‘bless’ God therefore, means to come before his presence, kneel in adoration and submission, lift up our hands and offer a gift. To offer the only gift we have to offer; to offer our whole selves.

What is amazing is that Paul declares here, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed **US** with every spiritual blessing …

Blessed us – we bless the God who has blessed us … God has come to us, knelt before us, stretched out His hands to us, and given us a gift – actually a ton of gifts – The Living God has come to us in Jesus Christ, He has gotten down on his knees in Jesus Christ .. The Living God has opened his hands, and given us the gift of Himself in Jesus – and with Jesus, He has given us everything else we need to be all God made us to be – Mercy – What Paul is celebrating in his theme sentence is the full implications of the benediction he heard all of his life as a Jew … God instructs the priest to say over the people …

The Lord bless you and keep you … The Lord makes his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up his countenance on you, and give you peace …

May the Father come to you, get down on His knees before you and stretch out his hands to you with a gift. That is why He can Keep you, He has come close to you, and stretched His hands out to take hold of you… Yahweh make his face shine on you .. Not from way above you, looking down on you but from right up in front of you… Yahweh lift up his countenance on you …” Since he is kneeling before you He has to ‘Look up” to see you. Wow – the God we bless blesses us – the Great and Awesome God, the Creator, has come to us in Jesus Christ, knelt down before us and given us the greatest gift He could ever give … God so loved that he gave his one and only begotten Son .. and with him ‘every spiritual blessing” every blessing the Spirit has to give! Amen

**7 things and our Union with him**

To become a Christian is not simply to get the Lord as your king to obey though it is that or as an example to follow though he is that or even as a savior to be grateful to. Yes, he is. That too. When you become a Christian, when you believe in him, when you rest in him, you are put in him. You're put in him.

So everything he has is yours. So what does that mean? It means we're united with Christ. What does it mean to be united with Christ? Well, first of all, we're united legally

in most places in the world. If you get married, if you get married to someone, let's just say you are absolutely poor. You have no money of your own, yet you marry somebody who is very wealthy, perhaps somebody who earned that wealth through hard work and through smarts. So if you have nothing and this person has everything and you get married, now you share that wealth – it is now yours, not as wages, but through legal union. It's legally yours even though you didn't earn it at all.

And so it is with Jesus. When you believe in him, you're united to him. And that means at least you're united legally. And that means, for example, Romans six says, we're united in his death. We're united to him in his death. What's that mean? Well, it means that when you believe in the gospel

God now treats you as if you are free from condemnation, as if you had paid the full penalty for sin on the cross too. See what Jesus Christ did on the cross is now yours. That penalty he paid is now yours. So that freedom is now yours.

On the other hand, we're told we are united with him in his resurrection. Remember the resurrection of Jesus was his vindication, his triumph. It's as if we're being told all of Jesus medals, all of his awards, all of his honors are pinned to your chest and now the whole world salutes you .

You see, we're in him. And what's that mean? It means that we're legally made one with him. So all the things that he's accomplished are now ours. And so one thing union means is we're united legally. And that has to do with the benefits that other parts of the Bible called justification or adoption.

But it's also true that we're united with him personally, organically. The Holy Spirit comes into our lives. And then there's a whole lot of benefits that come from that, like the new birth and character change and eventually glorification, which means a perfect flaw free, sin free free from suffering existence in your future. So every spiritual benefit, because we are in him, everything that he has is ours. When you believe in him, you're put in him, you're united to him

Review week 1 – Blessed us in the “beloved’ in Christ 7 aspects of blessing slide

1. **Chosen from the foundation of the world**

"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, just as **He chose us in Him** before the foundation of the world” , that we should be holy and without blameless before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself according to the good pleasure of His will."

First it says that I am chosen – handpicked – noticed, not left behind but chosen

His choosing us does not mean that he rejects others – when he choose Israel it didn’t’ mean that he rejected other nations – in fact in choosing Israel it was so the nation of Israel would be a blessing to the nations – to be chosen by God is sheer grace - no one of their own will seeks the true and living God – so unless God seeks no one will find, unless God chooses no one will be saved – Jesus said, you did not choose me but I choose you to go and bear fruit and fruit that would last – our salvation is not grounded in ourselves – our salvation is grounded in God’s free, sovereign and gracious choice in Christ to claim us for himself – Blessed be his Name!

* Foundation of the world – even knowing our sinfulness –

Just want you to try and wrap your brain around this – if God knew all of the sin that I would commit – why – if he hates sin – why did he create me and choose me ? Because God’s never ending love for you trumped even his immeasurable hatred of sin – Jason I knew all the things of sin that you would do and I hated everyone of them but my eternal love for you before you were ever fashioned in your mothers womb was infinitely greater than my immeasurable hatred of sin …

* And what is the reason for this election that we might be ‘Holy and blameless before Him’ to be Holy. Set Apart. Pure. Clean. Clear. Whole. (slide)
* Peter falls at Jesus feet and says, ‘depart from me for I am a sinful man, O Lord’ (Luke 5:8). Peter is ashamed and is basically saying, “Jesus, go away from me, I will make you dirty” - but Jesus would say, ‘no peter you will not make me dirty, I will make you clean”

Chosen in him – we are richer than we think!

1. **Adoption as sons**

and that this was predestined – it was always God’s plan - "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who predestined us– predestined us for what? to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to himself." And I like this last part, "according to the good pleasure of His will."

Going over this verse something connected in my heart, **a sense of belonging.**

And I realized, God the Father in heaven chose me – he adopted me,

He made it possible through his son Jesus Christ and brought me into his family. And I am a son of God – he wanted me.

It was his will - it gave Him pleasure - God chose me because He wanted me and it was His pleasure to adopt me as His son. I come from the FATHER \_

And I realized I am a son of God. I think that's the deepest thing about me. I think that's the most important thing about me, that I am His son. The theologian, J.I. Packer in his book, Knowing God, he answers the question, what is a Christian?

And he says, the richest answer I can give to the question, what is a Christian, is a Christian is someone who has God as his father. That's what we have. We are His sons, we are His daughters. We have a father in heaven, and we belong. We're not fatherless. We have a father that we belong to and He loves us and He cares about us. And it's in His heart to provide for us and to bless us.

**Through the work of Jesus on the Cross**

**– Jesus was cursed so we could be cured**

**– Jesus was rejected so we could be accepted**

**-Jesus experience the wrath of God’s righteous judgement so we could be released from the weight of sin and shame**

**- Jesus was broken on the cross so that our shattered destiny, our fragments could be brought back together again – we could be now be made WHOLE**

**- Jesus became sin so that we could become the righteousness of God in Him**

**- Jesus was wounded so you could be healed**

**This is our new identity**

And not just a son or daughter but a LOVED< BELOVED Son or daughter - 1 John 3:1 says, "See," key word, "see how great a love the Father has lavished on us." So not some little card in the mail on your birthday, but lavish love everyday - And what is this lavish love?

It is his son gashed on a cross for us. It's him saying to us, "I will never leave you behind. I'm not moving on without you. I will never forsake you. On the contrary, I will break through walls for you. I will climb up hills for you. I will run through the darkness for you. I will pay any price to get you."

And I WILL ALWAYS BE PRESENT WITH YOU –

See how great a love the Father has lavished on us, that we should become the children of God. And then I love this little add-on, **and that's what we are – that is our core Identity!**

**Father heart statements slide**

**Pray the Word – Names of the Lord - example Don’t be Afraid -**

1. **Redeemed**

Ephesians 1:7 (ESV), “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace”

* The word redemption was not used in paul’s day as a religious term – the verb form of the word means to ‘loose’ and was used often to loose someone from captivity – loosening slaves, prisoners, people from debt, or oppressive governments – and loosing somebody by payment – this payment was called the ransom or the redemption price – the majority of the roman world were slaves – jails were filled with prisoners of war – I think this word resonates with us as well – is not the growing mark of our times bondage and addiction
* This speaks to our human condition Apart from our being chosen – apart from grace we are in bondage – we are held captive to sin, evil, darkness, and death –
* I think this is one of the deepest longings and movements of the human heart to be set free –
* Through the shed blood of Jesus we have been redeemed - set free from captivity - by his blood he released us from the curse of the law, from the compulsion of sin, from the lordship of unseen powers in the heavenly places, from lies that ensnared the human heart and mind and from the fear of death.

Mark 10:45, “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

And now we belong to him – in Paul’s day what people redeemed they owned – listen to redeemed teaching – maybe add example here -

1. Forgiven his blood Ephesians 1:7 (ESV), “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,

Forgiveness is all about restoration of relationship – technically we could be set free from bondage but not be in relationship – forgiveness is about establishing relationship with released captives!

Our trespasses says Paul – The bible gives us 3 words that describe our human condition as those captive and in bondage – sin, trespass and iniquity

Sin – to sin is the miss the mark – like an archer that pulls back the arrow lets it go and misses the target – we all sin – we all miss the mark in some way or another

Transgress – to transgress is to cross the line – we come upon a fence or a gate with the sign ‘no trespassing’ we think about it for a few minutes and then we do it anyway – we transgress – going ahead and crossing the line

Iniquity – is the thing in us that makes us miss the mark or cross the line – the twistedness in us – the perversion that makes us want to cross the line

By his blood Jesus rescues us from iniquity releasing us from it’s compelling grip – by his blood Jesus erases our sin our missing the mark wiping the slate clean – and by his blood Jesus forgives our transgressions choosing not to hold our willful disobedience against us – he takes the rap for us and then brings us back into relationship with him and his Father. God does not necessarily deliver us from the natural consequences of our willful disobedience in the natural but he does forgive cancelling our indebtedness and he does restore relationship!

Ephesians 1:7–8 (ESV), “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight

**GRACE LAVISHED ON US WITH ALL WISDOM AND INSIGHT**

1. Insight into the mystery of history

From verse three to 14 of the first chapter of Ephesians is one long sentence in Greek. And there's 202 words in that one sentence. And no English translation feels, tries to make that one sentence. So they divide it into shorter sentences, which is good. But as you all know, the way to figure out what a sentence means is to find the subject and the predicate no matter how long a sentence is. You've got all the modifying clauses, you've got the preposition phrases. Find that subject and find that predicate and especially the predicate, and you figure out what the point of the sermon is.

So you realize that when you have the entire, this 202 word sentence divided into sub sentences in the English translation, you've got more than one predicate, which means it's not as easy for you to read it in English and tell what its main point is. So let me just inform you, this is the point right here verses nine, 10 especially the second half of verse 10, because the subject of this great sentence, of course is God and everything God is doing. He chooses and he adopts, he redeems and now he reveals. But everything he is doing in order to come to this particular purpose, and it's mentioned in verse 10, at the very end, at the second half of verse 10, everything in history is happening to this end. Everything God is doing is happening to this end and therefore it's important.

**Ephesians 1:9–10 (ESV), “making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth”**

We have this, that there's a plan, that everything's in the plan and that Jesus is a point of the plan

Sum up all things -

this idea of summing up is like this. If you've read a great essay with lots and lots and lots of true propositions, or if you've read a great narrative with all kinds of plot pieces, at the very end, if the essay has one compelling killer sentence that not only sums up everything but brings to conclusion and builds on everything else that was done, and every other proposition in a sense finds its fulfillment in that final thesis statement or everything else that's happened in the narrative is all brought together in this incredible resolution.

It's saying that's the relationship of Jesus Christ to everybody in the world and everything else in history. We were built for him. We were meant for him. We will only find fulfillment in him, and God is bringing everything to the place where finally Jesus Christ, the head, the king, in other words, is ruling again. And only when Jesus Christ is king will all the things falling apart come together again, will only then will things be healed. Our legends and stories are filled with stories about everything falling apart, and then a king shows up and he sits on his throne and he rules with justice and he puts down evil and everything is fine.

There's so many of those stories and you want to know where do they come from. When you actually look at the actual history, the actual record of kings in history, they're abysmal, they're tyrants. It's a mess. They're always killing one another to get to the throne. It's just terrible. So why do we have this persistent idea that if the true king shows up, somehow everything will be put right? Why is it that movies are still based on that and stories are based on that, and it always catches you? It's God’s plan to restore all things – to bring all things back Together again - back in paradise when we were first created, according to the Bible, nothing was falling apart. Everything came together and we stood before our true prince, our true king… standing before our true king and his power and his wisdom and his justice and his compassion and his glory like the sun shining in full strength – like we are fish, and that's the water we were built for that we only come to fulfillment in that like propositions in the final statement, like plot parts in the resolution.

It is the fuel. Loving him and serving him is the fuel we were meant built to run on and everything falls apart in a car. If the right fuel isn't put into the engine … it won’t run … it's all about him, about Jesus Christ and his kingship, his lordship, … the world is falling apart – our lives at times feel like they are falling apart all around us - because we've lost him as the king and he's bringing all of history back and everybody back to the place where at the name of Jesus, every niche shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

He made known to us the mystery and the word mystery in Paul always means gospel - Mystery always refers to the gospel. The gospel refers to Jesus Christ coming into this world to die for us.

Here's why you can trust this king. Do you know why the cross is so gruesome? There's the thorns, there's the nails. There's the spears. Remember the 39 lashes before he goes to the cross? You know what the 39 lashes were? It was a whip, of course with thongs, but on the end of the thongs were bits of metal and of bone so that when they whipped you, you didn't just have these stripes. It were pulling the flesh off of his back. Jesus Christ was pulled apart so that all things could come together.

Jesus Christ was torn to pieces so that we could be made whole. He had to come and suffer himself. He had to die on the cross. He had to take the penalty for our sins. He had to put us right with him. The only way to do that is to get rid of the guilt and then reconcile us to him. And only when our relationship with God comes together, will all the other things in your life start coming together …

– safe in the Plan

1. Obtained an inheritance

Ephesians 1:11 (ESV), “In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will”

We have obtained an inheritance and it is none other than Christ himself – we are called as his bride to be joint Heirs with HIM – this is too incomprehensible – too outstanding considering what we have been delivered and redeemed from – that he would take each of us who deserve eternal punishment - and not only forgive us and give us eternal life but share with us his own inheritance – is an outrageous authentic love that in all of eternity we could not fathom –

Mercy -

Grace – God’s riches at Christ’s expense – he gives us what we don’t deserve

Ticket example –

1. Sealed –

Ephesians 1:13–14 (ESV), “In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

His pledge to us of this great inheritance as his joint heirs is giving us his Holy Spirit to live in us now – all of the treasures on the earth are not worth having in exchange for the Holy Sprit to abide in us for one moment

When we believed we were sealed – when we heard the gospel of our salvation and believe we are sealed – this is what happens when we sign mortgage papers at the bank – the title deed is sealed – to authenticate the deed and secure the deed

God authenticates the deal in Christ with the Holy Spirit – God secures the deal in Christ with the third person of the Holy Spirt – my goodness!

The Greek word that paul uses for guarantee is the word arabon – an arrabon binds both parties in the deal both the buyer and the seller – in Paul’s day when the seller puts down an arrabon as a first installment but fails to put down the rest he or she was obligated to pay double the first installment – God is saying if he fails to fulfill the promise – which of course he never will – he will pay twice the arrabon – he will pay twice his first installment –

We are much richer than we think – seriously -

This is the great treasure that we have been given – the inheritance that has no equal in all of creation – our inheritance is the Lord Himself!

Summary Statements Slide

1. A Solid anchor – chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world
2. A new Identity – predestined to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ
3. Freedom – In Christ we have redemption
4. Restored Relationship – through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses
5. New Perspective – we know the mystery, everything summed up in Christ, the true head of all things – we can keep our balance in times of change and turmoil
6. An Inheritance – we share in God’s own inheritance
7. Security – sealed, God himself the first installment of our future

**Play my Gospel Identity to close**

1. Harold W. Hoener, *Ephesians: An Exegetical Commentar*y (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2002), 83. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Ibid., 85 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Frank Thielman, Ephesians (Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament) Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2010), 20. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Ibid., 21. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Ibid., 22. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)