

IN HIM

A. How many of you had trouble getting your kids to eat nutritious meals growing up? How many of you ever had your child barely eat their supper only to say they were hungry an hour or so later? How many of you ever had a son or daughter ruin their appetite by eating junk food before a meal you spent hours preparing? How many of you were guilty of all these things when you were a kid growing up?

B. Peter, whom Jesus commanded three times to feed His sheep, by extension charges each pastor to do the same. **1 Peter 5:2-3** says: *"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock."* **We take this charge very seriously. And how do we feed you? First and foremost by preaching & teaching the Word of God. Then we post and send out the notes and podcasts for further study. We include all the Scripture verses as well as bonus items, e.g. additional Scriptures, insightful quotes, articles and theological notes, video clips of songs, sermons, and other edifying things—all for your spiritual nourishment and health. We hope you are not merely picking at your food or spoiling your suppers with junk food. Please eat well and share with others.**

C. Ephesians 1:3-14 (ESV) is the text that will take us into Communion this morning. These verses are so jam-packed it will be hard to cut them into bite-sized pieces. So eat as much as you can, put the leftovers in your fridge, then eat some more in the days ahead. The love and generosity of God, wrought for us in the cross, unfold magnificently in these verses. When you take the Bread & Cup today, do so with elevated gratitude for all the riches we have in Jesus our Lord.

1) **V3-6** *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us **in Him** before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved."* **(In Him—the Beloved Son—Jesus Christ our Lord.)**

2) **V7-10 is the Gospel:** *"**In Him** we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of His will, according to His purpose, which He set forth **in Christ** as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things **in Him**, things in heaven and things on earth."* **(To lavish is to bestow generously and extravagantly and that is what God has done with His grace upon us. It is indeed amazing! And the coming of Christ came just as planned and right on schedule. Rom 5:6 (NLT) says: "When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.")**

3) **V11-14** *"**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, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory. **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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory."* **(As adopted sons and daughters, as joint heirs with Christ, we have obtained an inheritance; we have been written into our Father's will.)**

II. Communion

A. How does all this sound to you? Is this sufficient in bringing encouragement to your heart? Are the words we just read affirming enough to lead you into Communion? Let's shuck it all down and add it all together. In Him, Christ Jesus:

- 1) We are blessed with every spiritual blessing.
- 2) We've been chosen for redemption before the foundation of the world.
- 3) We've been made (and are being made) holy and blameless before Him.
- 4) In love (agape) He has predestined our adoption as sons and daughters.
- 5) He's adopted us for the purpose of His will to the praise of His glorious grace.
- 6) He's made known to us the mystery of His will and that is Christ our Redeemer who has paid our ransom and set us free from sin and guilt.
- 7) We have obtained an inheritance. (We've been written into our Father's will!)

8) Through the hearing of the Gospel, by believing in Him, you've been sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee (down payment) of our inheritance until we obtain possession of it, to the praise of His glory. (The Bread & Cup remind us.)

B. Colossians 1:19-20 (ESV), is a verse from last Sunday, takes us to the Table this morning: "For *in Him* all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross." (The Bread & Cup remind us.)

C. Last verse of "In Christ Alone" (Stuart Townend & Keith Getty)

"No guilt in life, no fear in death--this is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath, Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man, can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home--here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand."

*** Pray and Serve Communion...**

*** Ephesians 1:15-23 (ESV) is our Benediction verse today:** *"For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, 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. And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*

Scriptures, Videos, & Bonus Stuff

Ephesians 1:3-14 (ESV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4** even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love **5** He predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, **6** to the praise of His glorious grace, with which He has blessed us in the Beloved. **7** 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 **9** 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. **11** 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, **12** so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory. **13** 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.

Romans 5:6 (NLT)

6 When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.

Colossians 1:19-20 (ESV)

19 For in Him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, **20** and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of His cross.

Ephesians 1:15-23 (ESV)

15 For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, **16** I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, **17** that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him, **18** 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, **19** and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His great might **20** that He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, **21** 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. **22** And He put all things under His feet and gave Him as head over all things to the church, **23** which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.

In Christ Alone

Words and Music by Stuart Townend & Keith Getty

In Christ alone my hope is found;
He is my light, my strength, my song;
This cornerstone, this solid ground,
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.
What heights of love, what depths of peace,
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease!
My comforter, my all in all—
Here in the love of Christ I stand.

In Christ alone, Who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless babe!
This gift of love and righteousness,
Scorned by the ones He came to save.
Till on that cross as Jesus died,
The wrath of God was satisfied;
For ev'ry sin on Him was laid—
Here in the death of Christ I live.

There in the ground His body lay,
Light of the world by darkness slain;
Then bursting forth in glorious day,
Up from the grave He rose again!
And as He stands in victory,
Sin's curse has lost its grip on me;
For I am His and He is mine—
Bought with the precious blood of Christ.

No guilt in life, no fear in death—
This is the pow'r of Christ in me;
From life's first cry to final breath,
Jesus commands my destiny.
No pow'r of hell, no scheme of man,
Can ever pluck me from His hand;
Till He returns or calls me home—
Here in the pow'r of Christ I'll stand.

- Words & Music by Stuart Townend & Keith Getty Copyright © 2001 Thankyou Music

Film Clips & Other Links

"In Christ Alone" - Keith & Kristyn Getty

<http://www.gettymusic.com/hymns-inchristalone.aspx>

Adoption Story - David Platt

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtnGGFqpT80>

Adoption - C.J. Mahaney (Sermon Jam)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DV6cG6F8yXI>

According to His Choice, Not Our Works - R.C. Sproul

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zArjHbikAHU>

"Atheists Have No Songs" - Steve Martin & The Steep Canyon Rangers :-)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xmwAD7nHgaY>

Bonus Stuff

Romans 8:14-17 (ESV)

14 For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. **15** For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" **16** The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, **17** and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him.

Galatians 4:4-7 (ESV)

4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5** to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. **6** And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" **7** So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

1 John 3:1-3 (ESV)

1 See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know Him. **2** Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when He appears we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him as He is. **3** And everyone who thus hopes in Him purifies himself as He is pure.

Theological Note on Ephesians 1:4

The Life Application Study Bible

1:4: Paul says that God "chose us" to emphasize that salvation depends totally on God. We are not saved because we deserve it but because God is gracious and freely gives salvation. We did not influence God's decision to save us; He saved us according to His plan. Thus, there is no way to take credit for our salvation or to allow room for pride. The mystery of salvation originated in the timeless mind of God long before we existed. It is hard to understand how God could accept us. But because of Christ, we are holy and blameless in His sight. God chose us, and when we belong to Him through Jesus Christ, God looks at us as if we had never sinned. All we can do is express our thanks for His wonderful love.

- Theological Note on Ephesians 1:4, *The Life Application Study Bible*, Tyndale, p. 2612.

Theological Note on Ephesians 1:7

ESV Study Bible

1:7: Redemption denotes ransoming someone from captivity or from slavery. The supreme OT example was the exodus, where God redeemed Israel from slavery in Egypt (see Ex. 15:13; Deut. 7:8; 2 Sam. 7:23; Mic. 6:4). **Forgiveness for our trespasses** explains the nature of redemption: Christians are freed from slavery to sin and guilt. This was effected by Christ's **blood**, which means His death as an atoning sacrifice (see also Rom. 3:23; Eph. 1:14; 2:13; 4:30; Heb. 9:15).

- Theological Note on Ephesians 1:7, *ESV Study Bible*, Crossway, p. 2262.

Theological Note on Ephesians 1:7

NKJV Study Bible

1:7: Redemption: The word means "buy back" or "ransom." In ancient times, one could buy back a person who was sold into slavery. In the same way, Christ through His death bought us from slavery to sin. **His blood:** The blood of Christ is the means by which our redemption comes. The OT and the New both clearly teach there is no forgiveness without the shedding of blood. Blood here is the vivid symbolic equivalent of death. It recalls the sacrificial system of the old covenant, which looked forward to the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ that took away the sin of the world.

- Theological Note on Ephesians 1:7, *NKJV Study Bible*, Thomas Nelson, p. 1860.

Theological Note on Ephesians 1:10

ESV Study Bible

1:10: Fullness of time. "When the time was ripe," i.e., the time for fulfillment of God's plan. **Unite.** This is the central theme of the passage: God has effected cosmic reconciliation in Christ. The work of Christ on the cross is the central axis for the history of creation, whether in heaven or earth (see also Col. 1:15-20), since He redeemed His people and silenced all hostile powers (see Eph. 3:10).

- Theological Note on Ephesians 1:7, *ESV Study Bible*, Crossway, p. 2263.