

BEING IN CHRIST PLUS EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING

I. Ephesians 1:3-14

A. As you turn to our text this morning, I hear some of you prefer to just listen to me read the Scripture aloud rather than follow along. I reckon you just trust me. ;-) Raise your hand if you like the following verses: "To thine own self be true." "Moderation in all things." "Neither a borrower nor a lender be." "Cleanliness is next to godliness." "God helps those who help themselves." Well folks, those aren't verses found in the Bible. Thank Aristotle, Shakespeare, Ben Franklin for some of those quotations...

B. Our text today should encourage your hearts and instill a deep sense of privilege. Why? You'll see some of the rich blessings and benefits of being *in Christ*, i.e. having been made His. As I read this 12 verse doxology (rhapsody), one long sentence in Greek, listen for all the mentions of being, "*In Him*."

C. One more thing: 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 generous love and blessings of our Lord, purchased for us in the cross, unfold magnificently in these verses...

D. Ephesians 1:3-14 (ESV) is as rich as it gets...

1) **V3: 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, (In Christ we are blessed with every spiritual blessing! Totally incomprehensible! Is there any other way to read this?)*

2) **V4-6: 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 (and daughters) 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 (In Him-the Beloved Son of Almighty God).*

3) **V7-9: 7** *In Him we have redemption (We've been ransomed) through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace, 8 which He lavished (extravagantly bestowed) 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 (Once hidden, the revealed mystery is Christ Jesus who came to live the perfect righteous life and yet die for the unrighteous--us. "My sin for His righteousness!")*

4) **V10: 10** *as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth. (Lit: "When the time was ripe." Romans 5:6 (NLT) "When we were utterly helpless, Christ came at just the right time and died for us sinners.")*

5) **V11-14: 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 (**down payment**) of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of His glory. **(Count em: 9 in Hims!)**

E. Let's shuck it all down and pile it all together. In Him, in Christ Jesus:

1) We are blessed with every spiritual blessing. *(Totally incomprehensible!)*

2) We've been chosen by God for redemption before the foundation of the world. *(Please don't try to re-doctor what this is saying. You don't have to fully understand it but don't let what you don't understand keep you from receiving it!)*

3) We've been made (and are being made) holy and blameless before Him. *(Because of the Father's love, and because of Christ's work, and by the power of the Holy Spirit, we've been saved, are being saved, and will be saved. We call this: Justification, sanctification, glorification. We've been saved from sin's penalty; we're being saved from sin's power; and we'll be saved from sin's presence altogether, come one fine Day!)*

4) We've been lovingly predestined for adoption as sons and daughters. *(Formerly helpless sinners & enemies, we've been reconciled--not only turned into friends--but adopted as God's very own children! And this was His plan all along! Lincoln to an angry old woman who wanted the rebels destroyed: "Madam, do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?" (cf Romans 5:10-11)*

5) The mystery of His will has been made known--that is Christ is our redeeming Savior who came to ransom us from sin, death, and hell. *(He not only came to ransom us, His death paid the ransom. He was the priest who made the sacrifice and was Himself the sacrifice. Redemption is ours because of what Christ did.)*

6) We have obtained an inheritance. *(We share in the inheritance of Christ Jesus Himself! We've been written into our Father's will! There are no adequate words!)*

7) The Holy Spirit was given as the guarantee of our blood-bought inheritance. *(The Spirit is the One who regenerates us, who awakens us from death to life, makes our blind eyes to see, shines the radiant light of Christ into the dark recesses of our souls, who sanctifies us, who is likewise the guarantee, the down payment, of our inheritance until we obtain full possession of it in our Lord's glorious presence. What a Day of rejoicing that will be!)*

F. Grasping who we are in Christ should change everything. The more we gain some comprehension of this on the inside, the more it should effect us on the outside. If we were once not *IN HIM* but have been made to be *IN HIM*--it changes everything! It changes our walk: The way we walk through the house, through the yard, down the street, and up the road. The way we walk into work, into school, into church, a store, or even the post office. The way we walk (or are carted) into a hospital, the way we walk into a funeral home, the way we stroll through a cemetery. Being *IN HIM* should totally change the way we walk through this life!

G. In his book, *Knowing God*, J.I. Packer wrote: "If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's

child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all."

H. Let's close with the lyrics from an old hymn written by a gal in 1877 whose name was Harriet E. Buell. As you hear these words, you'll realize Harriet had some understanding of what it meant to be *IN CHRIST*. It's titled, "*A Child of the King...*"

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.

Quote by J.I. Packer

"If you want to judge how well a person understands Christianity, find out how much he makes of the thought of being God's child, and having God as his Father. If this is not the thought that prompts and controls his worship and prayers and his whole outlook on life, it means that he does not understand Christianity very well at all."

- J.I. Packer, *Knowing God*, p. 201.

Lincoln's Conciliatory Attitude Toward the South

"Madam, do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?"

Following a speech, Abraham Lincoln was once chastised by an elderly woman due to his conciliatory remarks regarding confederate southerners, referring to them as, "Our erring friends." The indignant woman allegedly said something to the effect: "*They are*

our enemies and they ought to be destroyed!" But Lincoln very graciously replied, "Madam, do I not destroy my enemies when I make them my friends?"

Perhaps Mr. Lincoln was thinking of Romans 5:10-11: *"For if while we were enemies we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, much more, now that we are reconciled, shall we be saved by His life. More than that, we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation."* (ESV)

Reconciliation truly is turning enemies into friends. No one has demonstrated this more lovingly and powerfully than God Himself. Glory be to His name!

A Child of the King

By Harriet E. Buell (1877)

My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,
His coffers are full, He has riches untold.

Refrain: I'm a child of the King, a child of the King;
With Jesus my Saviour, I'm a child of the King.

My Father's own Son, the Saviour of men,
Once wandered on earth as the poorest of them;
But now He is reigning forever on high,
And will give me a home in heaven by and by.

I once was an outcast, stranger on earth,
A sinner by choice, and an alien by birth;
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,
An heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown.

A tent or a cottage, why should I care?
They're building a palace for me over there;
Though exiled from home, yet still may I sing:
All glory to God, I'm a child of the King.

Bonus Goodies

"In Christ Alone" - Celtic Worship ft. Steph Macleod
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kvFtXphmMU>

The Spirit of Adoption - Sinclair Ferguson (Ligonier Ministries)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fEXxoNebzU>

Adoption Story - David Platt

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

Why Did God Choose Me? Three Truths About Adoption - John Piper (Desiring God)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9bZR0X75pZ4>

Immovable Hope in the Wake of Hurricane Ian - Jeramie Rinne (Sanibel Island Pastor)

<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/immovable-hope-hurricane-ian/>

[More Verses, Quotes, Excerpts, & Extras](#)

[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.

[Romans 5:10-11 \(NLT\)](#)

10 For since our friendship with God was restored by the death of His Son while we were still His enemies, we will certainly be saved through the life of his Son. **11** So now we can rejoice in our wonderful new relationship with God because our Lord Jesus Christ has made us friends of God.

[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.

[Titus 3:3-7 \(NIV\)](#)

3 At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures. We lived in malice and envy, being hated and hating one another. **4** But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, **5** He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, **6** whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, **7** so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.

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.

1 Peter 1:3-5 (ESV)

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to His great mercy, He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, **4** to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, **5** who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

Quote by R.C. Sproul

"Nobody is born into this world a child of the family of God. We are born as children of wrath. The only way we enter into the family of God is by adoption, and that adoption occurs when we are united to God's only begotten Son by faith. When by faith we are united with Christ, we are then adopted into that family of whom Christ is the firstborn."

Quote by Thomas Watson

"Adoption is a greater mercy than Adam had in paradise."

Quote by John Piper

"The Gospel is not a picture of adoption, adoption is a picture of the Gospel."

Quote by Max Lucado

"If anybody understands God's ardor for His children, it's someone who has rescued an orphan from despair, for that is what God has done for us. God has adopted you. God sought you, found you, signed the papers and took you home."

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.

4 Benefits of Our Adoption

By Sinclair Ferguson - From *The Trinitarian Devotion of John Owen*

<https://www.ligonier.org/blog/4-benefits-our-adoption/>

To contemplate all the privileges of communion with Christ would be, Owen says, *"work for a man's whole life."* Yet these are all summed up in what he regards as *"the head, the spring, and fountain whence they all arise and flow."* This—the highest privilege of all—is adoption into the family of God with all the rights and privileges of knowing Him as our heavenly Father.

Outside of Christ, we were strangers to the family of God both on earth and in heaven. But now we are brought near and made heirs. In Christ the Son, we have become the adopted sons of God: *“Adoption is the authoritative translation of a believer, by Jesus Christ, from the family of the world and Satan, into the family of God, with his investiture in all the privileges and advantages of that family.”* Thus, we enter into the manifold privileges that belong to the royal children of the heavenly King.

At first glance, it may seem strange that Owen discusses the theme of adoption within the context of communion with the Son. Adoption, after all, is by definition an act of the Father, and its confirmation is effected by the Spirit in His capacity as the *“Spirit of sonship.”* But Owen’s reasoning is fairly obvious: in union and communion with Christ, we become joint heirs with Him. So while each of the divine persons plays His particular role in adoption, it is appropriate to discuss adoption as the highest privilege of our union with Christ.

But in what do we enjoy communion as adopted children? Owen gives a fourfold answer:

1) We enjoy the liberty of the children of God. We are set free from the hold of the old family. No longer is its influence dominant—even if we are not entirely free from its atmosphere and even its menacing influence. There is all the difference in the world between obeying the Father who has given His Son for us, so that we can be sure He will also give us everything we need, and being in bondage to the law while making our best efforts to keep it.

2) We have a new title, and as royal sons enjoy *“a feast of fat things,”* not least in the church, where we have the privilege of belonging to the family of God and being served by, and in turn loving and serving, its members. More than that, there is a sense in which the whole world is ours to enjoy, because it belongs to and is preserved by our Father. No child in this family can ever justly complain that his Father has set up a restrictive regime without pleasures and joy. Isaac Watts was surely reflecting on this when he wrote:

*The men of grace have found,
Glory begun below.
Celestial fruits on earthly ground
From faith and hope may grow.
The Hill of Zion yields
A thousand sacred sweets
Before we reach the heav’nly ground,
Or walk the golden streets.*

3) We experience boldness before the face of God. In Christ, we are as righteous as He is before God. We have the privilege of calling Him *“Abba, Father.”* We can ask anything in Jesus’ name. What more could we ask for?

4) We experience affliction. But for the child of God, affliction is always chastisement—the action of the Father. This, as Owen rightly points out, is precisely the burden of ([Hebrews 12:5–11](#)). It is one of the chief distinctions between Christians and unbelievers. The latter seek but do not find any ultimate meaning in their suffering; as a result, unbelievers must attempt to create meaning. But not so Christians. For Scripture teaches them that, in Christ, trials have a goal. God is treating His people as sons by training them. Were He indifferent to us in our sin and waywardness, questions could rightly be raised about our legitimacy. In this sense, all discipline is evidence of His love. More than that, suffering in the Christian life is the training ground of the soul. The Father is equipping His children through adversity. If our earthly fathers discipline us for our good, how much more will the heavenly Father, who knows His children through and through?

Thus, when we were united to Christ, a transaction and transition of monumental proportions took place. It would be a tragedy if we did not catch a glimpse of the grandeur of what this means—it is nothing less than union and communion with the Son of God in our flesh.

- This excerpt is taken from *The Trinitarian Devotion of John Owen* by Sinclair Ferguson. This book may be ordered by going to: <https://www.ligonier.org/store/the-trinitarian-devotion-of-john-owen-hardcover/>