

## **A Timely and Encouraging Message: How to Have Calm in the Midst of Chaos**

“Let us not lose heart in doing good, for in due time we will reap if we do not grow weary.” Galatians 6:9

How can we live in the midst of a world gone mad?

Ephesians 1:3-14

In the original language, Ephesians 1:3-14 comprises one long sentence on the amazing grace that God lavished on us when He saved us through the shed blood of Jesus Christ. This passage encompasses the past, present, and future of God’s eternal purpose for the child of God individually, and for the body of Christ corporately. With poetic language and profound imagery, Paul takes us to the very throne room of the Godhead to reveal God’s amazing grace that He has graciously lavished upon every child of God.

In a culture that worships at the altar of achievement, acquisition, and ability, we must understand that a man without God has no spiritual value, no standing before God, no purpose, and no meaning in life. No amount of self-effort can ever gain him entrance into the kingdom of God. Every human effort at self-improvement or self-satisfaction is destined to fail, even when self-righteously clothed in religious activity, because such effort feeds the flesh, cripples the soul, and deadens the heart to the need for a Savior.

Jesus alone satisfies the deep longing of the soul. His amazing grace is the answer to what the human heart, ravaged by sin, is crying for. In this passage, Paul focuses on the role of each member of the Trinity in the story of our salvation, which was planned and prewritten in eternity past. Oh, the price that was paid for our salvation!

### **I. The Father Selected Us - Ephesians 1:3-6**

God the Father has blessed us, chosen us, adopted us, and accepted us in Christ. The Father “has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3). God has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in Christ. “His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness, through the true knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and excellence” (2 Peter 1:3). Our heavenly position and possession are so certain and secure that Paul speaks of God having already “raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus” (Ephesians 2:6). Our resources in God are not simply promised; they are possessed. The believer’s need, therefore, is not to receive something more from God, but to do something with what he or she already has! The heavenly places encompass the entire supernatural realm of God, His complete domain, the full extent of His divine operation. Christians have a paradoxical two-level existence - a dual citizenship. Christ is our Lord and King, and we are citizens of His realm, the heavenly places. That is why we are to pursue “things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God” (Colossians 3:1). As citizens of God’s heavenly dominion, Christians hold all the rights and privileges that citizenship grants, even while we are living in this foreign and sometimes hostile land. We are presently trapped in the tension between the earthly and the heavenly. The key to

living as a heavenly citizen while living in an unheavenly situation is to walk in the Spirit. “Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh” (Galatians 5:16). What a staggering truth! Everything we need to live the Christian life in power and in victory is ours in Christ Jesus.

God not only has blessed us, but “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Ephesians 1:4). Our salvation is by His grace and not on the basis of anything we have done. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, “For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is a gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast.”

In addition to blessing us and choosing us, He has also adopted us *as sons*. Adoption is the act of God giving His children adult standing in His family. A baby cannot legally use his inheritance, but an adult son can. We do not have to wait until heaven to begin to enjoy our inheritance in Christ.

God, for Christ’s sake, has accepted us *in the Beloved*. It is not our ability, appearance, accomplishments, or achievements that makes us acceptable; God accepts us on the basis of Christ’s finished work on the cross.

## **II. The Son Saved Us - Ephesians 1:7-12**

Christ has redeemed us *through His blood*. The word *redeem* literally means “to purchase and set free by paying a price.” In the Roman Empire there were over six million slaves who were bought and sold like animals. If a man was rich enough and compassionate enough, he could buy a slave and set him free. That is what Christ did for us. We read in 2 Corinthians 5:21, “He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.” Christ died for us. He redeemed us from the slave market of sin and set us free! With His blood, He paid the price!

Through redemption, we have been forgiven. The word *forgive* literally means “to carry away.” In the Old Testament on the Day of Atonement, the priest took two goats. He killed one of the goats and sprinkled the blood on the Mercy Seat to atone for the sins of Israel. Then he laid his hands on the second goat and confessed Israel’s sin over the head of the live goat. The goat was then led deep into the wilderness, never to be seen again. This goat was called *the scapegoat*. In the same way, Christ’s death upon the cross fulfilled both prophecies pictured by the Day of Atonement. Psalm 103:12 says, “As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” And then Isaiah 1:18 says, “‘Come now, and let us reason together,’ says the Lord, ‘Though your sins are a scarlet they will be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they will be like wool.’” The vicarious substitutionary death of Christ carried our sins far away *and* His blood was sprinkled on the Mercy Seat to atone for our sins. Our sin debt has been fully forgiven in Christ. In Isaiah 44:22 the Lord says, “‘I have wiped out your transgressions like a thick cloud, and your sins like a heavy mist. Return to Me, for I have redeemed you.’”

### III. The Holy Spirit Sealed Us - Ephesians 1:13-14

Paul said that after we heard the gospel and believed, we “were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise” (Ephesians 1:13). Paul is referring to an official mark of identification that was placed on a letter, contract, or important document. The seal was usually made with hot wax impressed with a signet ring. The document was officially identified with and under the authority of the person owning the signet ring. The Holy Spirit is God’s official mark of authenticity on the life of a believer.

The Holy Spirit is also given as *a pledge of our inheritance*. The word *pledge* was used to mean “the down payment to guarantee the final purchase of an item or piece of property.” It is similar to our use of earnest money in real estate. The Holy Spirit is God’s guarantee of our future redemption and entrance into heaven for all eternity.

The word *pledge* also came to mean “an engagement ring.” Our redemption is not only a legal transaction, but it is also based upon a love relationship. Jesus is our heavenly Bridegroom and we can rest confidently in the truth that one day He will come and lay claim to His bride, the church.

God chose and preordained the Body before the foundation of the world in order that no human being could boast or take glory for himself, but that all the glory might be His. Salvation is not partly of God and partly of man, but entirely of God. To guarantee that, every provision and every detail of salvation was accomplished before any human being was ever born or before a planet was formed or flung into space.

Don’t lose heart. Jesus paid it all! Amen and amen!