

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Sermon on November 18, 2018:**

**"Transforming Life Lessons
for the Church Today from Ephesus:
Part 2 (Ephesians 1:3-14)"**

[In today's sermon, Pastor Craig Kuhlman shows the spiritual blessings that we've been given by God in the past, in the present and yet to be given in the future.]

Notes

Introduction:

- Today, we're going to continue our tour of Ephesians and we're going to see the many spiritual blessings we've been given.
- We can truly, truly be thankful for these spiritual blessings because they change us and transforms us.
- God is taking us into His china cabinet of precious jewels with today's message from Ephesians 1:3-14, as to who we are in God's sight.
- Before we do that, it might be good to recap the transforming life lessons that we talked about last week.

Recap Transforming Life Lessons (Ephesians 1:1-2):

- 1) As part of the Church – we belong to Jesus Christ by God's desire and good pleasure, which means our life is not our own.
 - God's whole purpose for humanity was to reflect the very image of God.
 - And when we do that by giving up our life, so that Christ lives through us, our true humanity comes out.
 - Isn't it good that we belong to the Creator of heaven and earth, who decided to set aside His heavenly privileges and became one of us as He came to us?
- 2) We are sent by Jesus Christ.
- 3) We are sent by the power of Jesus Christ and not alone.
 - So the fact that we are sent by Jesus Christ shouldn't be a disturbing thought.
 - That's because we go with our Creator and Redeemer, the One we belong to.
 - That's truly amazing.
- 4) We are saints meaning set apart, made holy and made righteous for a sanctifying purpose.
 - God doesn't just set us apart for no good reason.
 - He calls us together, so that we can scatter to share the Good News.
 - The purpose we were placed here for is to love God and to love others without fear, shame, guilt or doubt.

- 5) We are and must be faithful and trustworthy in the trust and confidence we have in our reconciliation, redemption, and righteousness.
 - Now “having faith” means that we have trust and confidence in Jesus Christ and in the fact that we are redeemed and reconciled and brought into the very life of Jesus Christ.
 - This means that our past, present and future sins have been wiped away, as if they were never there, because of what Jesus did on the cross.
 - This is truly amazing!

- 6) We have been given grace – entirely underserved on our part.
 - We will see today that this plan was set in place by the Father, Son and Spirit.
 - They had such a loving attitude towards each other and wanted to extend their love to humanity, so that this plan was put in place before the foundation of the world.
 - So, this is nothing we could earn by our own efforts – thankfully!

- 7) We have a supernatural internal tranquility that isn’t dependent on external circumstances and unattained by not-yet-believers.
 - Once we believe and have that trust and that confidence and experience that relationship with God, then we can live our lives out of this, as God’s peace flows through us.

Every spiritual blessing in heaven:

Ephesians (NASB) 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,

- Now the Greek meaning of the word “blessed be” means “to adore, to love to cherish.”
- Notice there is no fear there.
- People often say that “We need to fear God!”
- No, that’s wrong, because “God is love” (1 John 4:8) and that “perfect love casts out fear” (1 John 4:18).
- There is no reason to have fear in our relationship with the Father, Son and Spirit.

3b) who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,

- Now, let’s think who is giving us our blessings – it’s our Creator.
- Notice it’s not just “some” spiritual blessings given to us but rather “every spiritual blessing.”
- These spiritual blessings, which are supernatural, are so much greater than physical blessings.

- They are so much greater than a good paycheck or a brand new car, or a day at the beach.
- We should be very thankful for these spiritual blessings because they are eternal and will stay with us forever.
- So, it’s good for us to just spend some time, sitting down on that sofa and letting God wrap His arms around us and think about how truly thankful we should be.

- In this darkened world, there are a lot of people looking for truth and seeking the blessings that we have so graciously been given.

- These are spiritual blessings for the believers, comprising the church, who have come to trust and believe in Jesus.
- Now later in Ephesians, we will see that through God's mysteries, we are actually seated with Christ in heavenly places right now (Ephesians 2:6), which may be difficult to believe at times.
- We've been given not just blessings, but we've also been given our home, our citizenship, our place in heaven.
- Now, this is really hard to fully comprehend and understand all that this means.

PAST blessing of election:

4) just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him.

- Who did God choose? – Every one of us.
- This was God's plan even before humanity was created.
- Not one of us was chosen last – we were all chosen first.
- It's out of God's good pleasure and love that He desired to have a loving relationship with each one of us.
- And what was God's purpose for choosing us? – that we would be "holy and blameless" which means that God sees us, as if we never had any sin.
- This was accomplished by Jesus on the cross, which was fore-ordained before Jesus came to this earth.
- And God is asking that our response to this is to just believe it – that we are the blessed children of God.

PRESENT blessing of adoption:

In love, 5) He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will,

- Imagine Time Magazine naming the most wealthy, most intelligent, most good-looking, most likely to succeed in life – are each one of us – God's sons and daughters.
- We are more precious in God's eyes, than we can ever imagine.
- Jesus and the Holy Spirit weren't twisting the Father's arm behind His back to give us the Father's good pleasure.
- It was out of the Father's initial kind intention to give us His spiritual blessings.
- There was no forcing, persuading, or cajoling because God has a heart of absolute love for each one of us.

6) to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.

- This deserves the praise of the glory of His grace.
- God is worthy of our love and adoration and praise for what He has done for us, which He freely bestowed upon us through His Son Jesus Christ.
- There is no negative feeling of ours towards God that will change how the Father, Son and Spirit look at us and continue to love us in every way He can.

- Because of His love, God longs to have a deep and intimate relationship with each of us.
- And when we have that flourishing relationship with Him, our lives change in such a dynamic way.

7) In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses,

- Through Jesus sacrifice on the cross, we have redemption and forgiveness – once and for all time.

7b) according to the riches of His grace 8) which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight

- Was God holding back in any way at all? When one lavishes something on someone, it's about as complete as can be.
- At Thanksgiving time, pastor Craig loves to lavish butter on his mashed potatoes and the hot dinner rolls coming out of the oven.
- The word "lavish" means there is no holding back.
- The love of the Father, Son and Spirit has been lavished on us until we are just dripping, sloppy wet.
- In fact, this is how God sees all humanity.
- But the problem is not all of humanity believes nor accepts this and don't respond to God's outpouring lavish love for them.
- As a result, they are living in darkness when they could be living in light.
- And our role is to shed God's light on others and be as loving to them as we can – that's what we've been called to do.
- God wants us to pour out His lavish love that's in our hearts to others.
- God's love isn't just from His heart, but it's also from His "wisdom and insight."

FUTURE blessing of unification:

9) He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him

- In most churches in the United States, if you offered a class on discerning God's will, it would be the most attended class because people are very curious about what God's will is all about.
- But, you know what, there's no mystery to it – here in Ephesians Paul tells us what God's will is.
- God's will is to lavish His love on us in an unimaginable way and to bring us to that reality and to share His love with others.
- Now those who come to hope first at this bring a lot of baggage with us.
- But those who come to hope in the future won't have that kind of baggage.
- So here in Ephesians God tells us that there is a special role to play at this time.

10) with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of the times, that is, the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

- So, at the end of the fullness of times, it's God's purpose and will, through Jesus Christ, to sum up – what? – “all things”.
- It's not just some things, it is all things.
- When the Father promises “all” His blessings to us, He is able to deliver them “all”.

These blessings belong to God's people:

- We are God's possession.
- We depend on God's will.
- We live for God's glory.

In Him 11) also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to His purpose who works all things after the counsel of His will, 12) to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

- God's blessings are not just given in the past or the present but it's also about a future inheritance that's promised to us.
- How many of you are Stevie Wonder fans?
- In one of his songs, he sang, “Signed, Sealed and Delivered – I'm yours.”
- Now just imagine that we are telling this to God.
- Pastor Craig asked the congregation to say this phrase out loud together, “Signed, sealed and delivered – I'm yours.”
- Then just imagine Jesus saying the same thing, “Signed, sealed and delivered – I'm yours.”
- Let's take it a step further and say together out loud, “Signed, sealed and delivered – we're yours.”
- That is exactly who we are.
- We'll see in these final few verses here is that when we came to believe, we were given a portion of the Holy Spirit that became our guarantee and our inheritance in that what we have today is as good as done in the future – no worries, no concerns.

13) In Him, you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation – having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise,

- Once again, pastor Craig gave his apologies to Stevie Wonder, because he probably wasn't talking about the sealing of the Holy Spirit.
- Yes, we were sealed with the Holy Spirit at the point of our belief in Jesus.
- That's why it's so important to believe.
- Once the Holy Spirit reaches out to us and illuminates us and removes the scales off our eyes to see exactly who we are, we begin to respond to the lavish love that the Father, Son and Spirit has poured out on us.
- Once we do that, we begin to live a spiritual transformed life

14) who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.

- That means that upon believing, the Holy Spirit placed His mark on us and He'll never remove it.
- Now even though we have eternal life, we are still living "the time between the times" and still have things to do, and we've got some pressures to face, and we've got some heartaches to live through.
- But we know that it's through suffering that we enter the Kingdom of God, and that God has called upon us and lavished with such a love, which we can be so thankful for today.

- Isn't this the most amazing thing that we could ever imagine – what God has done for us?
- Our Eternal Father loves us more than even the most loving parent could ever love their child.
- Now things in our physical life will fluctuate, but not the lavish love of the Father, Son and Spirit upon us.
- That's the message of Thanksgiving – that's something we can truly be thankful for.

Closing prayer