

**Living in Resurrection Power
(Week 1)
Ephesians 1
“The Wealth of His Glorious Inheritance”**

Introduction

“I never stop giving thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, The Glorious Father, would give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what is the wealth of His glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of His strength.” **Ephesians 1:16-19**

When I was young, there was a man who lived near us that everyone thought was very poor. He mowed the lawns for wealthy people and the business owners in town. He dressed in shabby clothes and drove an old worn out pickup truck. Everything about the way he lived his life made you think that he barely had enough means to get by. Imagine how shocked everyone was to learn upon his death that he had been a multi-millionaire! In fact, he had stored away more riches than all of those wealthy people that he had worked for... and yet, he had lived his life as a pauper.

Sadly, many Believers exist much the same way. They live empty defeated lives, never making a real difference in this world. They live their entire lives here on earth as “spiritual paupers”, when in reality they have been given immeasurable wealth through Jesus Christ. Paul longed for the church at Ephesus to come to full understanding of the riches that they had in Christ Jesus. In fact, in his letter to the church there, he mentions the phrase “in Christ Jesus” twenty-seven times! It is imperative for every believer to be able to access the great spiritual wealth that God has endowed for them. To be defeated by the powers of this world is inexcusable for the child of God, for in Christ we can do all things.

“I am able to do all things through Him Who strengthens me.” **Philippians 4:13**

Most all of us know this verse by heart, but do we fully comprehend its meaning? The reason that we can “do all things” is that we have been given the power through Christ to be more than conquerors (**Romans 8:37**). In our own strength, we can do nothing (**John 15:5**), but in Christ, we are without limitation. Paul longed for the church at Ephesus to not only know this truth, but to experience it in their every day lives. The church had started off so well, filled with faith and love for Christ, as well as, devotion to one another (**vs.15**). But sadly, we see in the book of *Revelation* that their love for The LORD would slowly begin to fade away, leaving them powerless to make any lasting difference in this world (**Revelation 2:4**). The church that loses its love and zeal for Christ, also loses its effectiveness to be a witness in this dark world. We must ever be mindful that being in love with Jesus, combined with a deep longing to remain connected to Him (**John 15**), is what empowers a church. It is what enables us to live as heirs of The King rather than spiritual paupers!

If only the church at Ephesus had stayed the course to which they had started, if only they had taken Paul's encouragement to heart and fully realized the great power that was readily available to each of them, then they would not have had to suffer the rebuke that Christ gave them in the book of *Revelation*. We too, must come to realize the great power that is ours for the taking. We pray and ask God for things that we have already been granted in Christ, and yet, we never seem to take hold of them. We struggle with the same hindrances over and again, not realizing that we have already been given victory over them. We too, like the church at Ephesus, need to understand how to live victoriously, how to walk in resurrection power. We can do this by faith, but first, it is necessary for us to understand just all that God has placed at our disposal. He has already granted to every believer all that he needs to overcome. We just need to fully understand all that God has done for us. Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians with one of the longest sentences that I have ever read. In the original Greek, the sentence begins in **verse 3** and goes all the way to **verse 14**! It covers three basic principals necessary for us to

live victoriously: The Father's Plan, The Son's Payment, and The Spirit's Pledge. This is one **amazing** sentence. Here on this Easter Sunday, I would like us to joyously embrace all that God has granted us through the death, burial, and resurrection of The LORD Jesus Christ. For it is in Him that we are given the wherewithal to live in resurrection power!

The Father's Plan

"Blessed is The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. For he chose us in Him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before Him. He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace that He lavished on us in the Beloved One." **Ephesians 1:3-6**

The first part of Paul's very long sentence deals with the plan of God for the believer. It was a plan that was set in motion long before the creation of the world. Have you ever considered that even before God uttered those incredible words in Genesis: "Let there be light", that He was already thinking of you? Well, He was, according to the scriptures. God was making plans to save you centuries before you were ever born! That is just how far back that His love for His children goes. You might be thinking this morning, "Pastor are you preaching about predestination?" No... God is! There can be no other interpretation of this passage. God knew all about those who would come to Him by faith, even before the creation of the world, and He made a plan to provide for their every spiritual need. Just as any good father would do.

He chose us before creation to be in Christ according to His own good pleasure (**vs. 5**). We did absolutely nothing to deserve it. He just chose us according to His own benevolence. If you are a child of God this morning, you have nothing to boast about except for the goodness of God! His plan was always to adopt us as His very own.

There is a fascinating truth to be found in this passage. You see, in order to become a part of God's family, a person must be "born again" meaning that they are regenerated by The Spirit of God. They are made a new creation (**2 Corinthians 5:17**). But, a newborn baby cannot have access to all of his inheritance until he is fully grown. God wanted us to have everything that He has in store for us as soon as we put our faith in Christ, so He "adopted us as sons" (**vs. 5**). This is very important, because it means that when we become a child of God, we are instantly granted the right of an adult heir. We don't have to wait to claim what He has for us. It is available to us now. You see, God planned ahead for us, in that when we belong to Christ, all that belongs to Christ, also belongs to us! We are joint heirs with Christ (**Romans 8:17**).

Just as a parent plans ahead to care for a child they are planning to have, God planned ahead for us so that our every need would be met in Christ Jesus. Does this mean what the TV preachers say it does, that God is up there just waiting to grant our every ridiculous and selfish request for fortune and fame? Of course it doesn't! Remember that the man who wrote this letter actually wrote it from a prison cell. Paul was as spiritual as they come, and yet, he suffered immensely in this life. But, Paul understood one great truth. God had foreordained a plan for his life, and He would see to it that Paul would live in such a way that would bring glory to God and make a difference in this world. Paul was blessed with every "Spiritual Blessing" (**vs. 3**) that there was. God held nothing back from Paul that would enable him to live in such a way as to bring glory to God.

This should be the desire of every believer, to be able to live in such a way as to bring glory to God with our lives. In fact, Paul uses the word "praise of His glory" three separate times in this long sentence. We must understand that in order for us to fulfill our destiny foreordained by God Himself, we must live in such a way that brings praise and glory to God. This is the highest calling for every believer. And, God Himself sees to it that we have every spiritual thing that we need to give Him this glory. He lavished His grace upon us, giving us salvation and spiritual blessings that we did not deserve. He adopts us as sons giving us full access to all that belongs to Christ. We are made heirs in Christ to all

that God has planned for us since before the beginning of time. If you don't feel that you have anything to be thankful for this morning, think on this for a moment. God has a plan... for you!

The Son's Payment

"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace that He richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding. He made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure that He purposed in Christ as a plan for the right time — to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in Him. In Him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of the One Who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of His will, so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to His glory."
Ephesians 1:7-12

I love how he refers to Christ as "The Beloved" in the previous verse. What a wonderful description of the Only begotten Son of God, Who would lay down His life as a ransom for many. Jesus died, so that we might have life. It was always the plan of The Father to offer His Son on Calvary's cross as a payment for our redemption. The word redemption (*apolytrosis* in the Greek) carries with it the idea of a ransom being paid. In the ancient world, slaves were bought and sold as a commodity, just as any other household item. If someone had a desire to set a slave free, he would first need to go to his owner and buy him out of bondage. We were all at one time in bondage to sin, but Jesus shed His very own blood to pay our ransom. This is the very essence of the story of Easter that we love so well. Christ died and rose from the dead to set us free. And, if The Son sets you free, you are free indeed (**John 8:36**)!

To those of us who have ever tried to adopt a child, you quickly learned that it is a very expensive undertaking. Sandi and I attempted to adopt two Guatemalan children for several years. The adoption was never finalized, but the cost was enormous. Of course, an orphaned child cannot pay for their own adoption, just as a slave does not have the means to set himself free. Someone else has to pay the cost. This is the reason why Christ came to suffer on our behalf. Where we were powerless to extricate ourselves from the bondage of sin, Christ, the sinless lamb of God, lay down His life as a ransom to redeem us. We were not only set free, but were adopted as a part of the family of God!

In *The Old Testament*, a person who had debt that he could not pay could be forced to serve as a bond-slave to the one whom he owed money. After serving six full years, The Law required that he be set free, whether or not the debt had been fully paid. But, that slave also had a choice to make. If he loved his master and did not wish to leave, he could offer up himself as a slave for life. If he chose to do this of his own freewill, he would be taken to the doorpost of the master's house and his ear would be pierced through with an awl into to doorpost, signifying that he was now a permanent member of the household (**Exodus 21:6**). His "marking" demonstrated that he had made the choice to serve his master out of devotion permanently. Paul makes a reference to this in the book of *Galatians* when he says:

"From now on, let no one cause me trouble, because I bear on my body the marks of Jesus."
Galatians 6:17

Paul was undoubtedly referring to the many scars he had obtained from the beatings he took as a servant of Christ, but he wanted the world to know that he had given himself over to Jesus as a slave for life. But, the truth for us is simple. Jesus paid our debt, and when we offer ourselves to Him as a "servant" for life, God adopts us as a Son instead and a joint heir with Christ! This is the good news of what took place on Easter. Our debt was paid, and we were not only set free, but we were made sons and given a full inheritance. What belongs to Christ also belongs to us. And, this includes access to some very amazing power! God has guaranteed this with His very own Spirit serving as a pledge.

The Spirit's Pledge

"In Him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the Word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of His glory."
Ephesians 1:13-14

Not only did God plan for our adoption, and Christ pay for it, but The Holy Spirit has been given to us as a pledge (down payment) of our eternal inheritance in Christ. When we accepted Jesus, at that very moment The Spirit came to live within us. He is our Counselor and Comforter. It is the Spirit that enabled us to believe in Jesus in the first place. Without The Spirit's prompting, we could never accept Christ as LORD.

"Therefore I want you to know that no one speaking by The Spirit of God says, 'Jesus is cursed,' and no one can say, 'Jesus is LORD,' except by The Holy Spirit."
1 Corinthians 12:3

It is also the Spirit that enables us to comprehend The Word of God. Those who do not have the Spirit of God cannot discern for themselves the truths of scripture.

"But the person without The Spirit does not receive what comes from God's Spirit, because it is foolishness to him; he is not able to understand it since it is evaluated spiritually."
1 Corinthians 2:14

So you see, The Spirit of God is the deposit or downpayment given to every believer as a guarantee that they will indeed receive the full inheritance that God has promised. When you are buying a home, you are required to make a down payment so that the seller will know that you are serious about going through with the purchase. God has given us His Spirit, so that we can know that He is serious about granting to us the full inheritance that He had planned for us since the beginning. If you do not possess The Spirit of God, then you do not belong to God.

"You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of The Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ."
Romans 8:9 (NIV)

The Spirit of God also empowers us to live as Christ lived, as we strive daily to obey His commands. We cannot be defeated, so long as we rely upon the power of The Spirit within us. Paul prayed that the Ephesians would come to realize just how great that power truly is. He tells them that the same power that rose Jesus from the dead was living within them (**vs.18-20**)! What an incredible reality this is for every child of God! We have The Spirit, the very same Spirit that raised Jesus from the dead that first Easter Sunday... LIVING WITHIN US!!

Now do you understand why there is no excuse for the believer to go around defeated, living as some spiritual pauper? We have been granted an inheritance from The King. All that belongs to Christ also belongs to us. Not only will we one day be with Him forever in Heaven as we receive our full inheritance, but in the here and now, we are granted the ability to live in The Spirit's power... His Resurrection Power! This is the reality of each and every adopted "son of God". Oh the vast riches that are ours in Christ Jesus! Are you feeling defeated and overwhelmed this morning? You need not be. Your inheritance has already been predetermined. God **planned** for you, Jesus **paid** for you, and The Spirit is your **pledge** of God's promise of power and purpose. Do you belong to Christ? Then you have all you need to be victorious. Do you not know Him today? Then why not surrender your life to Him? Believe and be an overcomer. Your inheritance in Christ is waiting... for you.

Now let ALL of God's adopted say... TRUTH!!!

Have a blessed Easter!