

Ephesians 1:3–6 | “Blessed Beyond Measure”  
*Preached on March 9, 2025 by Pastor Matt Brown*

Please turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 1, verse 3. *[pause]*

We are continuing in our new sermon series through the epistle to the Ephesians.

And last Sunday, we just covered the first 2 introductory verses of greeting, but now we will get into the content of the letter. *[pauseeee]*

What does it mean to be blessed? *[pause]*

Sadly, we are way too influenced by the world’s view of what blessing is. *[pauseee]*

The world’s version of being blessed involves lots of money and possessions.

It’s the people with the best-looking house, and the most stuff that many people lift up as the blessed ones. *[pause]*

These are often the people with a large social media following because they show off their extravagant lifestyle, and people gaze at them with envy.

But do riches and possessions really constitute being blessed? *[pauseee]*

When you see someone with that amazing house or all of those fancy, new things what goes through your mind?

Does thinking that they are blessed pop into your mind? *[pause]*

Is it something else that’s similar? *[pauseeee]*

The world’s version of being blessed also includes ease, comfort, and painlessness. *[pause]*

Many people envy others who *seem* to have such an easy, comforting, pain-free life.

And we wonder, “Do they even ever experience anything hard?” and we can get bitter, desiring that kind of quote-on-quote blessed life for ourselves. *[pauseee]*

We can even begin to act like if we experience discomfort or pain that we must have done something wrong, and we do not consider ourselves blessed when we go through such hardships.

But does a comfortable, pain-free life really mean that you are blessed? *[pauseeee]*

The world’s version of being blessed also includes being well-known and successful in earthly terms. *[pause]*

It’s the popular people that so many people think are the blessed, or it’s the ones who seem to be winning at their job, or at their endeavors.

But does all of that mean being blessed, according to the Lord? *[pauseeee]*

We are way too influenced by the world's view of being blessed because notice how all of these aspects of "blessing" are focused on the material, earthly, here-and-now aspect of life. *[pause]*

It's actually very shallow and short-sighted.

It acts like this earthly life is all that there is, and that blessings involve simply money, physical health, and possessions. *[pauseeee]*

The sad reality is that many Christians do not consider themselves blessed because they are comparing their lives with these shallow, worldly standards of what is not true blessing. *[pause]*

We are chasing after a lie, and thinking that it's blessing—all the while, we are already blessed in Christ. *[pauseeee]*

There's a story of "William Randolph Hearst [who] was a very wealthy newspaper publisher. *[pause]*

On one occasion he learned of some artwork he was determined to obtain, [so] he sent his agent abroad to search for the treasure.

*[And] after months of investigating, the agent reported that the treasure had been found. [pause]*

To further sweeten the find, Hearst learned that the relic wouldn't cost him a dime. He already owned it."<sup>1</sup> *[pauseeee]*

We are like that man, looking for something in all the wrong places, when we already possess it.

We are already blessed beyond measure in Christ, and Paul explains that to us here in Ephesians 1. *[pause]*

Let's READ it. *[READ]*

*The first truth that we find in this passage is that...*

### **I. God has blessed us in Christ. (3)**

In verse 3, Paul jumps right into praise of the Lord. *[pause]*

It's almost like he can't help but do this as he thinks about what all God has done through Christ.

Praise just flows off of Paul's lips as he says, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." *[pause]*

He lifts God up as deserving of all praise and honor and glory.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ministry127.com/resources/illustrations/wealth>.

He knows that God is worthy of all of this praise, and yet how little we praise the One who is worthy of all praise. *[pauseeee]*

Now why is it that God *deserves* praise? *[pause]*

On the one hand, He always deserves praise because of who He is—He is the Creator God, who is perfect in every way, but on the other hand, He deserves praise because of what He has done. *[pause]*

It's what God has done that Paul highlights here in Ephesians 1...

Paul praises God because “[He] has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” *[pause]*

God is the ultimate Blessor, who loves to bless.

We receive blessing from Him, the source.

You can't find blessing outside of the Lord, and it's “us” who have been blessed by Him. *[pauseeee]*

Now who is the “us” here? It's Christians! It's those who are “in Christ”. *[pause]*

To be ‘in Christ’ is to be in union with Christ through faith.

So once you place your faith in Him, you immediately belong to Him, you are truly ‘in Christ’. *[pause]*

As one commenter illustrates it, “As the root in the soil, the branch in the vine, the fish in the sea, the bird in the air, so the place of the Christian's life is in Christ.”<sup>2</sup> *[pauseeee]*

Paul is making it clear that the only way that we receive all of the following blessings is because of our connection to Christ.

You take Christ out, and the blessings disappear—but in Christ, we have every spiritual blessing! *[pauseeee]*

The way that God has chosen to give us good is through His beloved Son—Christ is the One who brings the blessings to us. *[pauseeee]*

Think of electricity coming to your house...

The electricity is like the blessings, but there's only one way to receive that electricity, you must have a cable that brings it to you. *[pause]*

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<sup>2</sup> Francis Foulkes, *Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 10, *Tyndale New Testament Commentaries* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1989), 52.

So Christ is like that cable, where due to our connection to Him, we receive all the blessings that we need. *[pauseeee]*

There are some people, who diminish the need for Christ. *[pause]*

*They act like all religions end up in the same place, but that's a lie.*

Christ is the way, the truth, and the life,<sup>3</sup> and we *must* trust in Him to be blessed by God. *[pauseeee]*

*It's through Jesus that God the Father has determined to act toward us in love and kindness.*

It's through Christ that God the Father has chosen to be the place where we receive His grace. *[pause]*

*So you reject Christ? You have rejected the place of God's blessing and grace.*

Therefore, no wonder there are such eternal ramifications, if you reject His Son! *[pauseeeee]*

*As Christians, we are not lacking in our blessings, but rather, we have every spiritual blessing in Christ. [pause]*

Now some of them won't be fully experienced until Heaven, but we still possess them in Christ. *[pause]*

*These spiritual blessings are spiritual because they come to us through the Spirit, and they are beyond this mere earthly world.*

In fact, they are found "in the heavenly places". *[pause]*

*The blessings that we have in Christ extend beyond this world, they extend beyond the here-and-now.*

They are in the heavenly places, so they cannot be touched! *[pause]*

*The blessings that this world calls 'blessings' often involve money, possessions, fame, and things such as that.*

And those things can be touched and impacted by others easily on this earth, but our blessings in Christ cannot be impacted by anyone on earth because they are in the heavenly places! *[pauseeee]*

*Christian, rejoice!*

God has blessed us in Christ with EVERY spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. *[pause]*

*We are the true blessed ones!*

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<sup>3</sup> A reference to John 14:6.

Right now, though you don't always feel it, if you have trusted in Jesus, you are *blessed beyond measure*. [pauseeee]

It's not due to your amazingness, but because you simply placed your faith in Jesus Christ, and now you are in union with Him, so that the blessings are yours. [pauseeee]

Though the world may call you 'not blessed', and may put you down so much even to the point of acting like you are the scum of the earth, it's not true to reality. [pause]

Look beyond the world's version of blessing to see what true blessing is, for in Christ, you are unfathomably blessed. [pauseeeee]

Are you living with envy towards others? [pause]

Are you discouraged, downcast, or depressed? [pause]

Remember this verse—you are blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing.

So everyday should be a day of thankfulness and joy due to being blessed in Christ. [pauseee]

How could we not rejoice over what God has given us?

Every look in the mirror or every look at another Christian should be one where we think, "That person is so blessed because of Jesus." [pauseeee]

Now what exactly are these blessings that Paul is talking about?

*Well that's what he expounds on next, and we see that...*

## II. God has blessed us by graciously choosing us. (4–5)

Paul begins an explanation of what are some of the blessings that the Lord has given to us in Christ. [pause]

We will find things like the Holy Spirit, our inheritance, forgiveness and other things later, but the first things that Paul speaks about are our election and adoption. [pauseeee]

Now I know that when we hear the words 'election,' 'chosen,' or 'predestination,' there are many thoughts and questions that swirl around our minds. [pause]

I don't want to get caught up in any philosophical talk, but I want us to focus on what the text says.

That is, what the Bible says is most important—not our own thoughts, not our own human logic, but what God's Word says. [pauseeee]

Without question, you cannot get around what the Bible says here, for it says, "he chose us in him before the foundation of the world." [pause]

That's in the Bible, we can't just skip over that part because it doesn't make sense or offends our understanding of what free will is, or something like that.

No, we must accept and believe what God's Word actually says. *[pause]*

The Bible says, "he *chose* us."

That's the word used here, it's not some translation issue—He. Chose. Us. *[pause]*

This means that God made a choice, He picked out, elected, or selected.

So He wasn't forced to do something, but He in Himself made a choice of people. *[pause]*

If you disagree with that, you disagree with the clear teaching of Scripture because you must do something with the Bible saying, "He chose us." *[pauseeee]*

We are also told *when* this happened, it happened "before the foundation of the world."

So this choosing came before Creation, that is, God chose people before they were even born! *[pauseeee]*

Before we were yet born, He chose us, not based on anything good that we did, for we weren't born yet, but based on His sovereign will.

And this is not an unjust deed of God, for God is always good and just, and this is not some erratic decision because God never does anything haphazardly. *[pause]*

So let me tell you this now, if you think that election is unjust or haphazard, then you have bigger issues because you have just denied the doctrine of who God is. *[pauseeeee]*

Paul is holding up God's sovereign choice of His people as something praise-worthy, so we should praise it. *[pause]*

Paul is holding up God's election of people as something to be seen as a blessing, so we should see it as a blessing.

And Paul is holding up God's choice of us as a prime example of His grace, so we should see it as *gracious*. *[pauseeeee]*

To miss the grace found in election, and to get upset or caught up in debate, is to miss Paul's point entirely, and to miss the sovereign, gracious heart of God. *[pauseeeee]*

Before we did anything good or bad, God in His love set His sights on us, and said, "I choose to shower my grace upon *them*." *[pause]*

He didn't have to do this!

We all have sinned against Him, and were deserving of eternal condemnation, and letting us all go to Hell would have been completely just of Him to do, yet in love, He chose us before the foundation of the world. *[pause]*

Talk about undeserved kindness! *[pauseeee]*

God's choice of people is not seen as something mean, but is actually one of the prime examples of His grace. *[pauseeeee]*

A similar example of election is what God did for Israel, where in Deuteronomy 7:6–8 it says this...

“The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth.

It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the Lord loves you.” *[pauseeeee]*

God's choice of Israel was not because they were amazing, but simply because God chose to love them.

And that's what He does for us—it's not because He saw how amazing we are or will be, but based simply on His choice to love us.

So rest in and relish in the love of God! *[pauseeeee]*

Now some people will say, “Well if God chooses people to be His, then why even have faith?” *[pause]*

Because God has determined that faith would be the means through which we would receive salvation...

It is by grace *through* faith.<sup>4</sup> *[pause]*

A person has to put their faith in Jesus Christ, or else they will not be saved—faith is indispensable. *[pauseeee]*

Even in this context of Paul talking about being chosen by God, later on in verse 13 he says...

“...when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and *believed in him*, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.” *[pause]*

So the Ephesians Christians were chosen, but they also had to actually believe in Christ.

The doctrine of election doesn't negate the need for personal faith in Jesus. *[pauseeee]*

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<sup>4</sup> A reference to Ephesians 2:8.

In verse 15, Paul says that he heard of their faith in the Lord Jesus, and verse 19 talks about the immeasurable greatness of God's power "toward us *who believe*." [pause]

Without faith it is impossible to please God, Scripture says.<sup>5</sup>

So while God chooses people to be saved, there is also a human responsibility to respond to the gospel. [pause]

Both ideas are true, and both must be held to and believed—we cannot neglect one or the other. [pause]

There is God's sovereignty and there is human responsibility, and how they work together is somewhat of a mystery, yet we must believe them because Scripture teaches both of them. [pause]

So although here we see that God chooses and predestines, we also see many other passages about the need to trust in Jesus. [pause]

Jesus says, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."<sup>6</sup> [pause]

The Bible says, "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that *whoever* believes in him should not perish but have eternal life."<sup>7</sup>

And it tells us that God "desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."<sup>8</sup> [pause]

The Lord is "not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."<sup>9</sup>

So we share the Gospel with people, we call people to respond in faith in Jesus Christ, yet we can also rejoice and believe in the truth that God is sovereign over it all. [pauseeee]

Now what's the reason for His choosing us? [pause]

It says that "he chose us...that we should be holy and blameless before him." [pause]

The purpose of God's choosing of a people is so that He would have a people who would be set apart in the world as holy. [pause]

He chose us to be holy and blameless before Him, reflecting His character in the world, and this is so important for us to remember as Christians. [pause]

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<sup>5</sup> A reference to Hebrews 11:6.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 11:28.

<sup>7</sup> John 3:16 (italics is mine).

<sup>8</sup> 1 Timothy 2:4.

<sup>9</sup> 2 Peter 3:9.



God didn't save us so that we could just rejoice briefly, and then go right back into the swamp of sin.

God chose us so that we would be different from the world, and reflect Him and His character. *[pauseeee]*

That's what He wants for us, but do we live like it? *[pause]*

He has made us holy and blameless in His sight through Christ's righteousness being put on our account, but do we live holy and blameless lives? *[pause]*

Do we reflect His character in this lost and dark world?

Do you even care about holiness? Is that an important thing for you? *[pause]*

It should be—it's the purpose of God. *[pauseeeee]*

At the end of verse 4 and into verse 5, we are told this, "In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will." *[pause]*

To 'predestine' basically means that God determined this beforehand.

So God determined beforehand that we would be adopted as sons through Jesus. *[pause]*

This is parallel with how we just learned of how we were chosen before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless.

Well now we hear that God determined beforehand that we would be adopted. *[pause]*

This was all according to His will, but it's not just according to His will and that's it, but actually the Greek word used is that it was according to the "good pleasure" of His will. *[pause]*

Doesn't that make a huge difference!

We 'will' things that we don't always want to do, but we do them because we know we should, but that's not what happened with God here.

Rather, God delighted and truly wanted to adopt us! *[pauseeee]*

In His great love, He genuinely desired to make us His children—doesn't that just blow you away? *[pause]*

Through faith in Jesus Christ, we actually become adopted children of the Heavenly Father.

And that means that we become co-heirs with Christ, and we receive all of the inherent blessings and privileges of being a part of God's family. *[pauseeee]*

We are His, and this is what He determined beforehand to make us, even before we were born or did anything good or bad. *[pause]*

We are adopted based solely on the sovereign, gracious will of the Lord. *[pause]*

He set out to save and adopt us in grace, so we have absolutely NO cause for boasting in ourselves. *[pauseeee]*

Isn't that so humbling and yet so loving?!

The God of the Universe—the perfect, holy, all-knowing, all-good Maker and Sustainer of Heaven and Earth has chosen to love us, who simply believe in Jesus Christ. *[pause]*

Not because we did so many works beforehand or so many good things, but simply because He chose to love us, even knowing all of the sins that we would ever commit against Him. *[pauseeee]*

So when people pass over you, deeming you unworthy of something. *[pause]*

When you do not feel loved by anyone, and you feel utterly rejected by so many people. *[pause]*

When you have sinned once again after telling yourself that you wouldn't do it ever again.

And all you are faced with is 'lonely you' in despair, feeling rejected, feeling like a failure, feeling like you never measure up to the standards of others, and feeling totally unloved...

You can rest in the knowledge that you are loved by God the Father, who chose you and adopted you to be His child forever. *[pause]*

He chose you to be His—He adopted you to himself because He loves you.

And even though He sees all of the sins you ever did and will do, and has seen your weaknesses and failures, He has made you His beloved child, and He did this through Jesus, when you placed your faith in Him. *[pauseeee]*

So no matter how rejected you are in this life by others, and no matter if no one on earth ever showed you love ever again...

You have been shown love, and you are loved forever by God the Father—that will never change. *[pauseeeee]*

You see, election and predestination aren't meant to be subjects simply hotly debated, they are meant to be balm for our souls.

They are meant to melt our hearts with the love and grace of God, so that we cry out, "Father, thank you! Father, I love you! Father, I glorify your name and glorious grace!" *[pauseee]*

What else could we do but humbly praise His name?

*And that's where the text goes next, as we see in verse 6 that...*

### **III. God has blessed us for His own glory. (6)**

As a parent did you ever find yourself asking your child, “Why did you do that?” *[pause]*

Like, “Why did you bite your sister? Why did you throw the ball onto the roof?”

You are trying to get down to their ultimate reason for doing what they did, and usually it takes a little bit to find out their true purpose. *[pause]*

Or maybe, have you ever wondered why someone did something really nice for you?...

Maybe you have been burned by others in the past, who didn't always have the best motivations for doing you good, so you try to find the purpose behind their kindness. *[pause]*

Well here we are told of God's ultimate purpose for showing us grace.

And it's not hidden under some ulterior motive that's bad, and we don't have to pry it out of Him.

Rather, He tells us that all of what He has done is done “to the praise of his glorious grace.” *[pauseeee]*

God has blessed us for His own glory—this is His purpose for choosing and adopting us in love through Christ. *[pauseeee]*

Now this is not wrong for God to desire for Himself, for He is rightfully due ALL glory.

It's only wrong when you want the praise for something that you don't rightfully deserve. *[pause]*

We don't rightfully deserve glory, so it's wrong for us to desire it, but God rightfully deserves all glory because He's the greatest in the Universe.

And guess what?

The display of His glory involves our ultimate good because when His glory is shown, we get to be the glad recipients of His grace. *[pause]*

The more grace we are shown by God, the more glory He deserves, so bring on the grace, and may God get the glory! *[pauseeeee]*

So what should we do in response to such kindness? Praise Him! *[pauseeee]*

He chose us, adopted us, loved us, saved us, blessed us, and so much more—what grace!

He has showered us with undeserved goodness, called grace, but it's not that He just has grace, but He has *glorious* grace. *[pause]*

His grace is truly glorious!

*It's beautiful, wonderful, marvelous, and matchless. [pause]*

His grace is great, amazing, and full of magnificent splendor.

*Words cannot accurately recount His glorious grace, it's too big, too great, too amazing to describe. [pauseeee]*

This grace of His has blessed us in the Beloved, which is another name for Jesus.

*So we have received the love of God the Father because we are in Christ, His beloved Son. [pause]*

Literally, the way this is written in Greek it talks of his glorious grace, which he has “graced” us with in the Beloved. [pause]

*His grace has been freely bestowed, kindly given to us. [pauseeee]*

So many people act like God is mean or stingy, but that's the farthest thing from the truth.

*God is a God of glorious grace, which He kindly gives to us freely. [pause]*

He doesn't stand there and say, “You can have all of this, if only you straighten up, or accomplish this huge list of things.”

*No, He graces us with grace. [pauseeee]*

All of this should lead us to fill the air with praises of joy and thanksgiving!

*We are recipients of the Lord's glorious grace—let that just boggle your mind for a while. [pauseeee]*

The Lord has purposed for us to experience His grace, so that we would praise Him for it. [pause]

*His glory and our good are tied up together with an unbreakable tie, you can't break the two apart. [pauseeee]*

Is your life one full of praise to the Lord? [pause]

*How often do you thank Him for what He has done?*

How often do you live with a joy that comes from knowing Him? [pause]

*How often does the way that you live reflect one of someone who has received immeasurable grace? [pauseeee]*

*This passage shows us that...*

**God deserves all the praise for the spiritual blessings that we have!**

Isn't it interesting that we so readily praise small things, but we are so slow to praise the Lord, who has given us everything? *[pause]*

We will praise the good things that we see or experience others do, but we overlook that God has done the greatest thing that could ever be done for us. *[pause]*

We praise the small acts of kindness shown to us, but we ignore the biggest act of kindness shown to mankind on the Cross. *[pause]*

I'm tired of praising lesser things, and forgetting to praise the biggest things.

I'm tired of praising the small, trivial things and acting like they are deserving of all praise when God deserves all the praise for what He has done for us. *[pauseeee]*

May our lives be ones driven by the praise and glory of God! *[pause]*

May our hearts drip with thanksgiving and explode with joy.

May our lips praise His glorious name.

May our lives be lived in such a way as to exult in the glorious grace of our Lord. *[pauseeee]*

All of this received goodness is possible for us to experience because of Christ.

For in just these couple verses, we see that we are "blessed...in Christ", we were chosen "in him", "adopted...as sons through Jesus Christ," and "blessed...in the Beloved."

It's all in and through Jesus! *[pauseeee]*

Because the Son of God humbly came to this earth, died for our sins, and rose again—through faith and union with Him, we have received His kindness. *[pause]*

We didn't merit it, but have received it all by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. *[pauseeee]*

Who are we to receive so much undeserved good? *[pause]*

We were nobodies, who sinned against the perfect, holy God...

Yet now we are somebodies, for we are recipients of glorious grace, blessed with every spiritual blessing, chosen in him, and adopted as sons. *[pause]*

May our hearts be thrilled with joy, may our lips praise His name, and may our lives reflect His grace.