

August 15th, 2018

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

Pastor Matthew Ude

Eph. 1:3-14 NKJ ³ Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly *places* in Christ, ⁴ just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, ⁵ having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, ⁶ to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved. ⁷ In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace ⁸ which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, ⁹ having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, ¹⁰ that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth-- in Him. ¹¹ In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, ¹² that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. ¹³ In Him you also *trusted*, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

Duck Tape its really good for patching things up. Yet ultimately whenever you are using Duck Tape you are really only making do. You can patch a window with Duck Tape but eventually your wife will tell you to buy a new window. If you are really wealthy, you might never need to use DuckTape. You never have to make do. If you are really wealthy you can always pay to have it fixed the right way or buy a new one. Why just make do if you are really wealthy?

Paul begins the book of Ephesians by reminding us just how spiritually wealthy we are. "Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing"

Especially in the first chapter of Ephesians but also throughout the book, he wants us to understand just how spiritually wealthy we are. Since we have so much in Christ, why settle for just making do, or the pitiful imitations of this world? Why eat margarine if you can eat butter? Why Tang if you can have fresh squeezed orange juice?

As we go through the book of Ephesians we are going to be continually seeing this, how wealthy we are in Christ, and how poor and worthless the imitations of men are. God's idea of parenting versus the world. God's idea of Marriage versus the world. God's idea of unity versus the worlds, etc

Today Paul really begins with the overwhelming richness that is ours, he begins “every spiritually blessing” then he just lists them: Chosen

Adopted

Holy and blameless

Redeemed

Wisdom, knowledge

Inheritance

Truth

Sealed by the Holy Spirit

Let’s begin with that first one: **God’s plan for us**

God has a plan and a purpose for us, for our lives but that purpose is not one that we use to drive our life, instead that purpose is what drove the life of Christ.

The world says pick a dream, hold it tight, let that dream and purpose drive your life. But here God has a plan for our lives, but He is the driver not us. Notice how many times Paul says according to the good pleasure of His will, how many times He says “He did this”

Also it’s not our life that is being driven but Christ’s. Notice how many times Paul says “in Him.” In order to achieve the desired result in my life, God drove the life of Christ

“the purpose driven life” is Christ’s life

What is that purpose? That I should be “holy and blameless before him in love.” This is the purpose that I should stand before God on judgment day and the Lord should say of me, “well done good and faithful servant, you are without fault or blemish.”

Compare that to any other purpose you might choose for your life, framer, president, governor. There is nothing wrong with these as sub goals for your life. Can they ever compare to the purpose that God has in store for you? Be governor if you want but don’t trade in God’s purpose for this.

The Wisdom and knowledge of God

Another gift Paul talks about is the wealth of wisdom and knowledge. The wisdom and knowledge that we have from God is way better than our own. One time Mark and I tried to carry our canoe across the rocks rather than use the portage. We slipped. We felled. We banged up our knees. In the end we were in the wrong spot. It took us three tries before we admitted that the guide books knew what they were talking about.

God gives us wisdom and knowledge in His word. He offers us some understanding of the mysteries which He planned from creation

Again we so often trade in His wisdom, for the useless imitation our own pitiful understanding. How much better is the eternal wisdom of God rather than our own experience.

Thirdly Paul reminds us that we were **Sealed by the Holy Spirit**

What does a seal do?

It identifies. The Holy Spirit identifies us as belonging to Christ, and this should be a thing we take pride and glory in. We are the children of God. Lisa Dumke was just telling me the other day that she is the great granddaughter of August Pieper. That isn't something to hide. That is something to be proud of. Yet so often we try to hide that mark that says "I belong to God." Why would we want to be like the people of this earth, when we have been adopted by God?

It guarantees. Whoever has been baptized has the Holy Spirit, whoever has the Holy Spirit is going to inherit heaven. We have this assurance this down payment from God on the riches of those things that we will receive in Heaven.

What are some of the things people substitute for God's seal through the Holy Spirit? Good works, belonging to a church miracles, yet none of these things can replace the guarantee we have in the Holy Spirit.

Instead whenever we are tempted to doubt, whenever Satan accuses us of a sin. We stand and spit in his face, Jesus died for me. I am baptized, in that baptism I was given the Holy Spirit. I am Christ's and He is mine. Satan cannot deny a single thing I just said.

But if we use faith, or works or miracles, Satan can easily say, well have you done enough? Is your strength strong enough? What pale useless imitations these things are.

When you hook your trailer to your car, do you want a chain that looks like steel, or one that is steel?

The riches of the gifts that are ours in Christ are far beyond anything this world can offer. Reject the imitations take hold of the truth in Christ.

Amen