

# Our spiritual blessings in Christ

## Introduction

One morning R.C. Chapman, a devout Christian, was asked how he was feeling. "I'm burdened this morning!" was his reply. But his happy countenance contradicted his words. So the questioner exclaimed in surprise, "Are you really burdened, Mr. Chapman?" "Yes, but it's a wonderful burden-- it's an overabundance of blessings for which I cannot find enough time or words to express my gratitude!" Seeing the puzzled look on the face of his friend, Chapman added with a smile, "I am referring to Psalm 68:19, which fully describes my condition. In that verse the Father in heaven reminds us that He 'daily loads us with benefits.'"

We so often request blessings from God that we don't realise how much He has already blessed us with. Our focus is normally on material blessings. As nice as material blessings are we can lose them in a moment. However, God has blessed us with spiritual blessings that can never be taken from us. These are true blessings.

Ephesians 1: 3 – 14

### 1) Blessings of grace

- Our blessings aren't earned and they aren't deserved. They're given to us by God by grace and grace alone.
  - Ephesians 1:3 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.
- Christians often come to pastors and ask them to pray for blessings on their lives
  - What Christians need to do is take hold of the blessings that God has already given them by faith
  - No prayer by any pastor will be able to add to what God has already given believers – He has blessed us with EVERY spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms.
    - 2 Peter 1:3 His divine power has given us everything we need for a godly life through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness.
  - By saying "in the heavenly realms" we understand that it's not merely the quantity of blessings – every – but the extent of the blessings – eternal
    - 1 Peter 1:3-4 Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade. This inheritance is kept in heaven for you.
- Non-Christians also often to ask for prayer for blessings
  - Although God, in His mercy, provides for the righteous and the unrighteous alike, His spiritual blessings are reserved for those who have entered into a relationship with himself
  - He Himself is the greatest blessing that we can have. If we don't want Him then why should He share His blessings with us?
  - If we look at all these spiritual blessings they are found in Christ
- The term "in Christ" and its variants is used 9 times in these 12 verses
  - This means that every blessing of grace is found in Christ and not apart from Him
  - It is by grace that we were incorporated into Christ when we believed.
  - In Christ we have salvation, hope, and eternity
  - Apart from Him we have nothing

## 2) Our spiritual blessings in Christ

- We so often have our Christian clichés such as “Be blessed”, or “the Lord has blessed”, etc.
  - These are general statements about being blessed, but they don’t carry much substance.
  - Saying how we are blessed carries substance
- The Spiritual blessings in Christ
  - We are chosen by God
  - We are loved children of God
  - We were thought of before time
  - We are redeemed
  - We have grace lavished on us
  - God has revealed the mystery of His will to us
  - He has given us hope
  - We have been included in Christ
  - We have been given the holy Spirit
  - We belong to God
- All of these blessings are eternal and none of them can be lost
- They are all blessings of grace – we haven’t earned any of them
- Although they are all blessings in themselves, they are also interconnected
  - He thought of us before the beginning of time and chose us. He lavished His grace on us by redeeming us and making us His loved children, belonging to Him, to whom He gave the promised Holy Spirit and the mystery of His will. In this redemption we have hope

## 3) The ultimate purpose of spiritual blessings

- We are naturally selfish and often only want blessings because we want to feel good, be successful, are in need, etc.
- However, what is the ultimate purpose that God gives us spiritual blessings?
- This passage starts with “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” and ends with “to the praise of his glory.”
- Verses 11 & 12 give a summary of our spiritual blessings and spells out the purpose of them:
  - Ephesians 1:11-12 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.
- Although we benefit immensely from the spiritual blessings of God in this life and for eternity, they’re not about us but about Him
- The ultimate purpose is that God be glorified
  - According to the Westminster shorter catechism: Man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.
- “Glorifying” means feeling and thinking and acting in ways that reflect his greatness, that make much of God, that give evidence of the supreme greatness of all his attributes and the all-satisfying beauty of his manifold perfections.

John Piper