



Ephesians 1 EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING



→ *Where does Ephesians rank amongst your 'favourite' biblical books? If you were limited to one, which would you take on your desert island?*

TEXT: EPHESIANS 1:1-14

Benefits of Expository Preaching

- a) Leans into HIGH VIEW of authority, integrity, power of Scripture.
 - b) Lets the Bible SPEAK FOR ITSELF.
 - c) Teaches us how to INTERPRET Scripture for OURSELVES.
 - d) Takes us on a JOURNEY.
 - e) Covers areas we otherwise MIGHT NOT GET TO.
- *What do you like about expository teaching series?*

EPHESIANS BACKGROUND

Ephesians was a large, important city on the west coast of Asia Minor, modern-day TURKEY, prominent because of:

- a) ECONOMICS → Important trade centre.
 - b) SIZE → Population 300,000.
 - c) CULTURE → Theatre, library, etc.
 - d) RELIGION → Shrine to Artemis/Diana.
- *Anything else you can find out about ancient Ephesus?*

EPHESIANS TIMELINE (Dates approximate)

- 50 → Acts 18:19 = Paul stops by + promises to return.
 - 52 → Acts 19 = Paul's longer visit (see Acts 19:11-12, 17-20).
 - 54 → Paul travels to Macedonia, leaving Timothy behind (1 Tim 1).
 - 62 → Paul writes letter to Ephesians from prison in Rome.
 - 96 → John writes letter to church found in Rev 2:1-7.
 - 431 → Eastern Church holds council in Ephesus.
 - 2016 → Turkey positioned 45th on Open Doors Watch List.
- *Why not read Acts 18-20 for yourself this week?*

³God ... HAS blessed us with EVERY SPIRITUAL BLESSING in the HEAVENLY REALMS in Christ.

- *PAST TENSE: What is the difference between a FACT and a PROMISE? What other facts / promises can you think of? (e.g. Heb 13:5, 2 Pet 1:3-4)*
- *Why is it important to make the distinction?*

1. THE SOURCE OF THE BLESSING

- * God is not UNDER-RESOURCED.
- * God is able to BLESS (resource) because He sits in a position of GREAT BLESSING (resource).
- * Your blessing isn't based on God's WHIM or GOOD MOOD, but on what JESUS DID 2000 years ago.
- * All the good things written about in Ephesians 1 and beyond have been PURCHASED by the BLOOD of JESUS and made available through the PROMISES of GOD'S WORD.

→ *Do you live in fullness of that rich blessing? Do you, instead, live half a life? Or from your own limited resource bank? How are you doing taking hold of the 'every' / 'all'?*

→ *What is the blessing of God? What do we mean by heavenly riches? How do we take hold of it? How can it transform our lives?*

2. THE POSITION OF THE BLESSING

- * FEET on EARTH; HANDS in HEAVEN

→ *What does it mean to say "Touching heaven, changing earth."*

- * OUR CHOICE: Look to EARTH for BLESSING: VALUE, SECURITY, PROVISION or look to HEAVEN.
- * We have an altogether different POSITION / CITIZENSHIP / PERSPECTIVE (Eph 2:6, Phil 3:18-20, Col 3:1-2).
- * OUR TENSION: To live as God's VESSEL here on EARTH, (and the reality is we're still subject to the whims and ways of this fallen world), yet to operate as one RESOURCED, EMPOWERED, IDENTIFIED from HEAVEN.
- * To THINK heavenly THOUGHTS, PRAY heavenly PRAYERS and PERFORM heavenly TASKS.

→ *Where do you look for your value, security or provision? What does it mean to be a citizen of heaven (Phil 3:18-20)? What is the difference between earthly-minded and heavenly-minded (Col 3:1-2, Rom 8:5-8)? What does it mean to operate as one resourced, empowered and identified from heaven?*

→ *What are heavenly thoughts? What are heavenly prayers? What are heavenly tasks?*

3. THE NATURE OF THE BLESSING

- * There's a heavenly RICHES / ABUNDANCE which is far SUPERIOR..
- * It's tempting to go after what the WORLD OFFERS, but if we do, we MISS the POINT.

→ *What is the difference between earthly and heavenly riches and abundance? Which are you set up to pursue right now?*

RESPONSE QUESTIONS

1. *WHAT riches/blessing are you PURSUING?*
2. *Do you live from earth looking up OR heaven looking down?*

TD JAKES: "To be convinced that we are about to receive great riches, we must be confident that the person giving the riches is capable of doing so. A cheque is only as good as the cheque-writer's ability to pay."

"As children of God, we must know that our Heavenly Father possesses everything we need in life, a promise He makes to us throughout the Bible. Paul opens his letter to the Ephesians by declaring the grace, resources and power of God."

"Paul considers the foundation of all of our blessings in Christ to be this fact: God is blessed. He is not frail, impoverished or impotent. He has every resource at His disposal, both things seen and unseen. Nothing lies beyond His ownership. God is all-powerful. He is fully capable and able in all situations, at all times, and regardless of circumstances to exert control over His resources. God has authority over all things. He can and will do what He says He can and will do when it comes to blessings."

WARREN WIERSBE: "God the Father has made us rich in Jesus Christ. When you were born again into God's family, we were born rich. Through Christ, you share in the riches of God's grace, glory, mercy ... the unsearchable riches of Christ. Our Heavenly Father is not poor; He is rich – and He has made us rich in His Son."

WARREN WIERSBE: "The unsaved person is interested primarily in earthlies, because this is where he lives. Jesus called them the children of this world (Luke 16:8)."

"The Christian's life is centred in heaven. His citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3:20, Eph 2:6); his name is written in heaven (Luke 10:20), his Father is in heaven; and his attention and affection ought to be centred on the things of heaven (Col 3:1). The battles we fight with are not with flesh and blood on earth, but with satanic powers in the heavenlies (Eph 6:12)."

"The Christian really operates in two spheres: the human and the divine, the visible and the invisible. Physically, he is on earth in human body; spiritually, he is seated with Christ in heavenly places and this is what provides the power and direction for the earthly walk."

"The President of the US is not always seated at his desk in the White House, but that executive chair represents the sphere of his life and power. No matter where he is, he is the president. Likewise with the Christian: no matter where he may be on this earth, he is seated in the heavenlies with Christ Jesus, and this is the basis of his life and power."

TD JAKES: "The Ephesians understood wealth. Ephesus was a city with marble streets, mosaic sidewalks, a massive temple that was considered one of the wonders of the Greek world, a busy port, a popular athletic arena, one of the finest libraries in the first century, and villas filled with artwork, tapestries, silks and exotic birds and animals."

"Caravans from the east routinely ended their journeys at Ephesus, and ships from ports throughout the Mediterranean brought the riches of Egypt, Rome, Greece, Spain and northern Africa."

"The apostle Paul came to town and blew their minds by presenting a type of wealth they had never encountered before. Paul presented to them the God of all riches, the God who gave His only begotten Son, His most precious possession."

"The wealth the apostle Paul brought to Ephesus is Jesus Christ. In Him is everything a human being could ever dream of, hope for or desire – and more."

"... when we are born again, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in our hearts and we begin the adventure of the truly privileged: discovering our riches in Christ."