

The Grand Doxology

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[0 : 00] Well, I invite you to open your Bibles to Ephesians chapter 1, verses 3 through 14. So let's do what we just sang.

Let's listen to God's Word. If you have a pew Bible in front of you, I think that's 1159 is the page number. Ephesians chapter 1.

But Paul writes this letter from being chained to a Roman soldier in a rented house in Rome.

And he writes this. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Him with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

In love He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of His will, to the praise of His glorious grace with which He has blessed us in the Beloved.

[1 : 06] In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight, making known to us the mystery of His will according to His purpose, which He set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time to unite all things in Him, things in heaven and things on earth.

In Him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him, who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

In Him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for this passage, and thank you for the reminder and the call for us to bring you praise.

Oh, we have so many reasons, so many opportunities, so many things in our minds and hearts as we reflect on what it means to be a believer in Jesus Christ, how much we have to praise you for.

[2 : 29] I would pray that as we work our way through this passage, that you would begin to press on our hearts the glory and wonder of who you are. We would think about you.

We would think about what you've done. In eternity past, now and for eternity future, what all this means.

And may our lives be changed so that we go here in the rest of the day, the rest of the week might be to the praise of your glory.

We pray that you'll help us, that you'll work in us, and that you'll change us for your glory alone. In your name we pray. Amen.

Most of us know the doxology. We sing it here. In fact, we're going to sing it today at the end of the service. You know the words. Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

[3 : 29] Praise Him all creatures here below. Praise Him above ye heavenly hosts. Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. My first pastorate, I inherited the tradition of singing the doxology after receiving the offering.

So every Sunday, receive the offering, we would all sing the doxology. We didn't have words in front of us. We all knew the song. It was very easy to sing. We would all remember it. But I was always bothered by that because I thought, we're just singing this rote.

We're not really thinking about it. We really ought to do something with that. So I decided that we would sing the doxology but to an alternate tune.

The tune was the hymn, Jesus Shall Rain. It works perfectly in the hymn. But this would be a great thing for us. So we'll concentrate more on what we're singing than just singing this rote idea.

Well, suddenly, as we began to sing that song to the tune of Jesus Shall Rain, it sounded more like a foreign language. And we were all fumbling over the words.

[4 : 31] And finally, most people quit singing before the brief little song was completed. And I was told after that, don't ever try that again. Often in Scripture, the Bible writers break into doxology, an expression of praise to God.

One example of that is in Romans chapter 11. Paul was arguing for the sovereign purposes of God in chapters 9 through 11 of that great book.

By the time he reached the end of that section, it seems as if he could really hold back no longer in his praise to our great God. And so he writes this, Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God!

How unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways! For who has known the mind of the Lord? Or who has been His counselor? Or who has given the gift to Him that He might be repaid?

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be glory forever. Amen. Well, in this letter to the Ephesians, Paul is going to write about Christ's unsearchable riches.

[5 : 41] And I suspect that as he began to contemplate the vastness of God's greatness and the wonder of God's grace, he breaks into a doxological discourse involving the triune God, even before writing the rest of the letter.

You may have sort of picked it up in the English version of Ephesians 1, but did you know that in verses 3 to 14 are actually one long sentence in the Greek text?

Paul would not have made it in an English class for run-on sentences, but an incredible truth of what God has done and the reason for this great doxology.

So, verses 3 through 6, he tells us this. All spiritual blessings come from the Father.

So think about that for a minute. As you read through this, it's a little bit hard. There's a lot of hymns in there. Blessed be the God and Father. Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world.

[6 : 45] He and Him. And it's hard to try to figure all that out. But I think the emphasis is on the Father. But He's telling us that in the Father, from the Father, all spiritual blessings come.

Well, what are some of those blessings? Well, for one, is He chose us. Verse 4. He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world. Before anything was created, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.

He didn't just choose us to save us. He chose us to make us into something that would be presented to Him. Holy and blameless. Left to ourselves, we would never have chosen Him.

The Bible tells us that we are dead in our sin. We would never seek after God. There's no one who seeks after God. No one has ever sought after Him. We are unable and unwilling to respond to a holy God.

In fact, the Bible says that we are enemies of God. But in His infinite mercy and grace, He determined to call us out of the bondage of sin and grant to us eternal life. And so we praise Him.

[7 : 48] For those of us who belong to Christ, why did God choose us? Have you ever thought about that? Why did God choose me? I don't know. But I know that He did.

And I hope I never get over the wonder and the shock that He chose me. If you're sort of patting yourself on the back for believing in Jesus, I'm sure glad I came to that conclusion.

You've missed Paul's point. And you're not really entering into this grand doxology. See, God the Father chose some out of the whole of already condemned mankind.

And He gave them the gift of His Son. A gift that on the one hand was given to the Son, and on the other hand, purchased by the Son.

The Father took the initiative and chose some. That is an incredible spiritual blessing. He not only chose us, but He predestined us.

[8 : 48] Verse 5. The Father predestined us. That's a word that we sometimes trip over a bit. But just think of it this way. God set His love upon us a long time ago. The emphasis is in the past.

He did this a long time ago. According to the purpose of His will. And His infinite wisdom and sovereign authority, before He ever made the universe, He determined to set His love upon those who would believe in Him, that we might be able one day to stand before Him face to face, wholly and without blame.

He had to choose us, and He had to set His love upon us, if that was ever to become a reality. So He chose us, He predestined us. These are all blessings from the Father through the Son. He chose us, He predestined us, He adopted us. Verse 5. We who were aliens from God, enemies of God. He adopted us into His family.

And He granted us all the rights and privileges as children of His. Again, according to the purpose of His will. Verse 7 reminds us that He redeemed us.

[9 : 56] What's redemption mean? Well, the idea is to purchase and set free by the payment of a price. In Paul's day, one would go to the marketplace, the agora, to purchase merchandise, and then take it home, take home what was purchased.

It now belonged to the one who made the purchase. So what was bought was set free from the marketplace. That's redemption. We're not merely bought and brought out of the marketplace of sin, never to be returned, but we are set free from our condition as a slave to sin.

He bought us and set us free from the penalty of sin. Charles Wesley understood this when he wrote the song, And Can It Be? One of those verses in that song says, Long my imprisoned spirit lay fast bound in sin in nature's night.

But he speaks of God. Thine eye diffused a quickening ray. I woke the dungeon flame with light. My chains fell off. My heart was free. I rose, went forth, and followed Thee.

That's the way it was. God redeemed us. What an amazing spiritual blessing. When I start to think of God and start to praise Him, what's the first thing that comes to our mind?

[11 : 17] It seems to me it ought to start with, What did He do for me? He chose me. He predestined me. He adopted me. He redeemed me. All those things are great spiritual blessings that come from the Father.

And then He applied His design and purpose for us, to us and for us. That's sort of verses 8 to 12 and sort of wrapping that up kind of quickly.

But this may be the answer to why we must praise Him. Everything God has done and will do is for the praise of His glory.

For the praise of His glorious grace. In other words, God's design of salvation, that is, rescuing us from sin and death and granting to us eternal life.

And God's, not only His design for salvation, but His design of sanctification, that is, making us holy and conforming us into His image. And His design for glorification, that is, presenting us holy and blameless before Him.

[12 : 18] All of that was to praise Him. In fact, in the final analysis, my salvation is not ultimately about me.

Your salvation is not ultimately about you. It's about Him. He, not we, will be the focal point of all eternity.

It's not, look at all those people who have been redeemed. In heaven, it will be, look at this great God who redeemed all those people from every tribe and tongue and nation.

You see the difference? The focus is on Him, not on us. So, why would God choose us and set His love upon us? Well, unaided, we never would have responded to Him. If we could have, we would have taken the credit.

And that would go contrary to the very intention of God's plan. This rescue was to magnify the greatness and glory and grace of the Rescuer.

[13 : 20] He purposed to do this because for all eternity, He will be the focus of all praise. All that we are now and all that we will be in His presence is because of Him.

John Calvin, during the time of the Reformation, wrote, Whatever happens to us, let us always assure ourselves that we have good cause to praise our God.

And that even if we are poor and miserable in this world, the happiness of heaven is enough to appease us, to sweeten all of our afflictions and sorrows, and to give us such contentment that we may nevertheless have our mouths open to bless God for showing Himself so kind-hearted and liberal towards us, as even to adopt us as His children, and to show us that the heritage which has been purchased for us by the blood of His only Son is ready for us, and that we cannot miss it, seeing that we go to it with true and invincible constancy of faith.

We have been blessed. Blessed beyond measure by the Father. And those blessings from the Father come to us through the Son.

So the second idea here in this passage is that all spiritual blessings which come from the Father are found in Christ Jesus. That's where we find them.

[14:47] That's where these blessings come to us, and through Him, through Christ, these are the blessings that we have. So in Him, whether that means in God, the Father, or in Christ, you could make an argument either way, but in Him, in God, we have redemption.

We have been chosen by the Father to be holy and blameless, but before we arrive at that promised position, something had to be done in regard to our sin. And so we need to talk a little bit about redemption's price here.

Sin was a serious problem, an affront to a holy God. It could not merely be overlooked or ignored. A price was required, and the seriousness of the offense required an astronomical price.

Before sin became a reality, God had established the price that had to be paid to deal with sin.

Remember what it was in the garden? In the day you eat of this forbidden fruit, what happens?

You will die. And so death, a couple different ideas about death, death would come physically, but before that, death came spiritually in that man was now separated from God.

[16:03] So that happened, they were excommunicated from the garden. No longer was there a face-to-face relationship with God. Everything had changed. And years later, Adam and Eve would die physically.

Death is separation. It starts with separation from God, and then ends with separation from our body and our spirit. That was what God had designed.

The sacrificial system throughout the Old Testament introduced the idea of a substitute to pay the penalty for sin, which included the payment of a blood sacrifice.

The problem with that was that this system was never-ending. How many animals do you suppose were slaughtered during the Old Testament time?

Reading some of the passages in the Old Testament, just amazing, you know, the thousands and thousands and tens of thousands and millions probably of animals, sacrificed.

[17:10] It never ended. Sacrifice, and another sacrifice, and another sacrifice, continued on. But the problem was that that debt for sin was never satisfied.

The debt was too big. It was sort of like having a loan and paying only the interest. How long will that take you to pay the loan? See, there was an appeasement, as it were, for the sacrifices in the Old Testament so that life could continue without major interruption, but the debt never got any smaller, much less satisfied.

The full payment would still one day be required. So what was that payment? Well, we know. Jesus, the only one who could pay that enormous price, came and paid the price in full through His blood. So the Father's blessing of redemption is found in Jesus. In Him, we have redemption. For seven tells us, in Him, we have forgiveness.

So what is forgiveness? Well, forgiveness means to carry away. The truth was prefigured in Leviticus chapter 16, where a priest would bring two goats. One would be sacrificed.

[18:27] The other, he would lay his hands on the goat as a symbol of passing the sins of the people onto that animal. And then the animal would be led off into the wilderness and that animal would, that goat would never be, make its way back.

It would be lost forever. We call it the scapegoat. All right? That's where that came from. The goat was left there never to return. And that same truth is, we see that arrive several times throughout the Old Testament about how God carries our sins away.

If John Tippmann would have continued reading in Psalm 103, he would have come to this verse, as far as the east is from the west, so far as he carried our trespasses, our sins from us.

He removed, he removes our sin from his very presence. Jeremiah 31 verse 34 says, their sin I will remember no more. Not only is sin removed from his presence, it's also removed from his mind, his memory, as it were.

Isaiah 43 verse 25, Isaiah writes about, quoting God, I, I am he who blots out your transgressions for my own sake.

[19:46] Sin, gone from his presence, gone from his mind, gone from his ledger. Micah chapter 7 verse 19, he casts all their sins into the depths of the sea.

Gone from sight, gone, gone. We used to sing as a kid, gone, gone, gone, gone, yes, my sins are gone. Now my soul is free and in my heart's a song, buried in the deepest sea, yes, that's good enough for me.

I forget the rest of it, but it ended with G-O-N-E, gone, whatever, you know. But it was so good that that's gone, my sins are gone, they're carried away, they're gone, in Christ Jesus. He's given me forgiveness.

Is that not something for which to give him praise? That's what the psalm, that's what Paul is writing about. Why do we need forgiveness? We're transgressors.

We've deviated from the truth, we've broken the law of God, we've missed the mark of God, that God's standard, that God's perfect standard, there's nothing that we can do to satisfy the offense.

[20 : 47] The requirement is death. Without forgiveness, we stand condemned to die. And not just physical death, but separation from God forever. But some of the sweetest words in all the Bible are found here.

In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses. On what is forgiveness based?

Verses 7 and 8, it's based on the riches of God's grace found in Jesus. I appreciate it so much, Zach, picking out the music today because it really was, it was, it was, much of that was coming right from this text.

Most of the words of those songs reminding us of the grace of God, how God lavished His grace. Don't you love that word? Lavished. Lavished upon us.

When God forgives us, He keeps nothing back. There are no conditions to be fulfilled by us. He forgives according to the riches of His grace. When we are saved from our sin, God saves us from the penalty of sin.

[22 : 00] Again, what's the penalty of sin? Death. He saves us from the penalty of sin. What does He give us? We don't, we don't die for our sins now. We live for what?

We live forever. We have eternal life. So, He exchanges death for eternal life. And then, in Him, we have wisdom and insight.

Verses 8-12. Because God has lavished His grace upon us in Christ, we have been given understanding of the mystery of who God is. At least something of that. And what He's doing and where all this is going.

We can at least know this. It is according to God's will. He planned it all without any help from anyone. It's according to God's own good pleasure. That is, He did it by Himself, for Himself, to please Himself.

It is the revelation of God's plan for the management of the universe. In God's perfect plan and time, God will restore all things to and for Himself. And this restoration will be better than the original condition where there will be no possibility of becoming tainted, damaged, or destroyed.

[23 : 10] As Paul praises God, he does so knowing that all these blessings, all of this lavished grace from the Father comes through Jesus. Now there's one more piece of this, and that's in verses 13-14.

All spiritual blessings from the Father found in Christ Jesus are guaranteed in the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the Holy Spirit of promise.

Jesus had told His disciples that He was going back to heaven, and He was going to send another comforter. The word comforter, I don't know if it's the best translation or not, because usually when we think of comforter, what do we think of?

Think of somebody, you know, a shoulder to cry on, or somebody to console us. But really the idea of the comforter here is really an advocate.

It's somebody who comes alongside us to strengthen us. That's really the idea behind it. So Jesus, as the one who brings, we find our strength in Him, He then ascends to heaven and sends His Spirit who continues to strengthen us.

[24 : 28] And so, what happens when Jesus told the disciples, I'm going back to heaven, and I'm going to send another comforter, and you're to wait, and what do you get on the day of Pentecost?

He's going to come with power, strength. And so there will be strength from the Spirit to give you what you need to continue to live.

The indwelling presence of the Spirit in the believer is, at least in one sense, an undeniable mark of God's work in us and for us.

So I can be assured that if the Holy Spirit is in me, then I belong to God. I'm one of His very own. So God gives His Spirit. He's the Spirit of promise.

It's a promise that says that I belong to Him. But He's also the earnest or down payment of our inheritance. That means a couple of things.

[25 : 28] If you were to go buy a home, there's a probability that you have to put up some money. It's not the whole amount for the house. It's just some money that guarantees that there's going to be more to come, right?

And it's saying that we're sort of holding this. This is a guarantee that you'll get the rest. Earnest money. Well, in a strange sort of way, that word is used for the Spirit.

He becomes the earnest or the promise or the down payment on our ultimate glorification. That word was used in secular Greek to speak of a down payment on an animal or down payment on a wife.

In this case, the Holy Spirit is a down payment, something very important, very valuable, but it was the promise of a future completed transaction. So the Father has given to us all these wonderful blessings and promises and so that we know that the certainty of the fulfillment of these promises, He has left the Holy Spirit as a down payment.

If He would leave His Holy Spirit with me, don't you think that certainly He will complete what He started and bring me all the way home?

[26 : 45] people want assurances because human words are often not reliable. We seek oaths, guarantees, warranties.

We want to make sure someone's backing up what has been promised. Certainly, God's Word is good and that should be enough for us, but God has graciously provided us with His own guarantee, the promised Holy Spirit.

When we first trust Christ, we do not directly or immediately receive all the promises of God. Peter reminded us in his writings that many of those promises are, quote, reserved in heaven for you. But we do have the promised Holy Spirit. Surely that's enough for us to give Him praise. The Spirit is the down payment with the promise of more to come.

The second idea here is that of a seal. The seal is a mark of ownership. It's a mark of a finished transaction. To have the Holy Spirit is to be able to declare, I'm saved.

[27 : 50] That was Paul's message in Romans chapter 8. We have the Spirit of God, we belong to Him. There are several stories in the Bible that illustrate the truth of a signet ring when the king or some other high-ranking official sealed something with the king's seal.

That was a mark of authenticity. That's the Holy Spirit to us. Close to that idea is the idea of security. If you want to secure something, you would seal it.

Younger people have to understand this, but just before the earth crossed hardened when I was in junior high school, we didn't have social media platforms, we didn't have cell phones, we didn't have any of that.

We did this very strange thing. We used paper and a pencil and an envelope and we wrote letters. Now, in junior high, some of you need to think back a little ways at that point, but junior high kids say lots of stuff and a lot of things they want to keep secret, they want people to know about it, so these notes would get passed and be put in an envelope and you could lick the envelope if you want to and seal it, but it's easy to steam those open or whatever and kind of people would know they've been tampered with.

So kids came up with this idea of this wax seal and so you'd put a wax seal on that envelope and then you would put your initial in the seal and it would harden and then if you tried to open the envelope, you would break that seal and people, this messy thing on the envelope, you'd know somebody tampered with it.

[29 : 24] We were pretty sharp back then. Well, the idea of the Holy Spirit is the seal that God has placed on us and may I remind you that there is no higher power that could break that seal.

That's security. The seal means that we're in process. We're still down here. We still sin. All of that's going to be, all of that is going to be someday.

All these things will be true. Sin will be gone. All that's gone someday. But it's not here yet. The good news is that God has left this Holy Spirit who in spite of all of our sins and all of our failures and all of our shortcomings and all of our inconsistencies is a source of encouragement concerning His gracious work in us and the incredible promise of more to come.

So the seal means that we're in process but it also guarantees completion. Paul told the Romans in the Roman folks in his letter in chapter 8 that creation is waiting eagerly for the completion of our

redemption.

That sounds a little strange. But when we're complete all of creation will be made new. Though creation is groaning now it is anticipating with confidence that this promised day will arrive.

[30 : 55] The seal the Holy Spirit is the promise the guarantee that all of this will happen. I have the down payment that God will not default. What He has planned before the foundation of the world He will complete.

You know Philippians chapter 1 verse 6 that He who began a good work in you what's He going to do? He's going to finish it. He's left His Spirit here to guarantee that to us that He'll finish His work. There may be many reasons why this is so but Paul reminds us at least of this. The seal is to the praise of the Father's glory.

See God planned all of this and invested in His Son to carry out redemption's plan. He brought that good news of salvation to us and when we believed He gave us the Holy Spirit as a promise of completion and all of that to the praise of His glory.

For this to end in some tragic default or failure or unfinished work that would not bring glory to God. In the divine purpose of redemption the primary reason for our salvation would be lost.

[32 : 05] That's not going to happen to anything that God has planned. That's not going to happen to anything that God is implementing. As an encouragement to us concerning this grand inheritance we have been given God's Holy Spirit.

How is that for reason to give praise and glory to God? So you have the Father who has given us all these spiritual blessings all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places all that through the Son and all that guaranteed by the Holy Spirit.

At the moment we receive our full inheritance which will include a glorious resurrection body the redemption of God's own possession will be complete.

We will be granted the inheritance as God's own possession fully released from all the effects of sin. We will then be fully manifested as His own peculiar special treasure enjoying forever all that He has planned for us from eternity past.

We are not our own we are bought with a price we are to glorify God in our bodies whether we live or die we are the Lord's. Some things in the Bible theological truths sometimes they are hard for us to put together some throughout the ages have made ways for us to remember answers to questions and be able to answer articulately about what the scripture teaches those were called catechisms they were used for both children and adults to teach important truths and here is a question that maybe I should ask you and ask myself what is your only comfort in life and death?

[33 : 56] Think about it what is your only comfort in life and death? in the Heidelberg Catechism in 1563 this was the answer given to that question that I with body and soul both in life and death am not my own but belong to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ who with his precious blood has fully satisfied all my sin and delivered me from all the power of the devil and so preserves me that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head that all things must be subservient to my salvation whether by his Holy Spirit wherefore by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and makes me heartily willing and ready to live unto him my guess is that you probably wouldn't have answered that question quite like that but that's the answer that's the answer that certainly was Paul's perspective ready to live for him ready to give him praise for all that he is and all that he's done that's all a grand warm up for what awaits us in his very presence so are we able to respond to God with a heart overflowing with love and gratitude as did Paul all that has happened from the father's blessings found in the son sealed by the spirit all of that was and is and will be to the praise of his glory so the question for myself and for you is that where our hearts are today if not what do we do

I would suggest we go back and reread the text what's it say and then start praising him for what he's done and maybe after we do that a few times our hearts will sound something like this again from a hymn by Charles Wesley finish then thy new creation pure and spotless let us be let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee change from glory into glory till with thee we take our place till we cast our crowns before thee lost in wonder love and praise whatever the tune here's the believer's responsibility and joy praise God from whom all blessings flow praise him all creatures here below praise him above ye heavenly hosts praise father son and holy ghost amen let's pray father thank you for this incredible wonderful mind blowing plan redemption of salvation of sanctification of glorification all the things that you have planned and are doing and will accomplish help us to give you praise for that when we get down and overwhelmed when the pressures and

problems of life press in on us we feel like nobody cares and life is lost oh may we think about who you are may we remind ourselves that this is all about you and you are the great God who has chosen us predestined us redeemed us may this wonderful plan all of that through your son all sealed by the spirit all of that for your glory alone as we leave this place in a few moments may our hearts and minds be fixated on that blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus it's in the name of your son our savior Jesus Christ that we pray amen meanings on for to hear Jesus an verse his gaze