

All The Blessings

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Preacher: Rev Murdo Campbell

[0 : 00] Murdo Campbell, delighted to welcome Murdo to the pulpit for this weekend. He is a Stornoway boy. He became a member here in the congregation in 2006, he was just telling me.

And he's now been a minister in Barres Free Church for 10 years, and it was 10 years ago yesterday was the date of his induction there. So we're very thankful to have Murdo with us, leading the services over this weekend, and we do pray God's blessing on him and on us all together as we come under the sound of the glorious gospel of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And I'll invite Murdo now to lead us in our worship. Well, good evening. It's lovely to be with you this evening, and God willing, over this weekend. We do pray that we know the Lord's blessing as we meet around God's Word and also around the Lord's table. You know, I was thinking as I was coming over the moor from Bonnie Barvis, in our pulpit, or my pulpit, I have this sign that reminds me every time I stand in the pulpit.

It says on it, Sir, we would see Jesus. And I was thinking that's what we should be longing for this coming weekend, that we would see Jesus, that we would see none other save Jesus only, that he would be lifted up before us, and that in lifting him up, we would all be drawn to him, to know him, to love him, and to follow him, and even to walk with him more closely.

So let us worship God this evening. We're going to sing to God's praise in Psalm 32. Psalm 32, it's in the Sing Psalms version, on page 38, if you have the blue psalm book.

Psalm 32. The tune is Arlington. We're singing from the beginning down to the verse mark 7.

[2 : 03] Psalm 32, page 38. All of our psalms this evening, they focus upon the theme of blessing or blessedness. And Psalm 32 is, it's a psalm that was written after Psalm 51. Psalm 51, it's my favorite psalm.

It's the psalm where David confesses his sin. And then he wrote, after he wrote Psalm 51, he wrote Psalm 32, because he knew the forgiveness of his sin. He knew how blessed he was to receive forgiveness for his sin. That's what David writes here. He says, how blessed the one who has received forgiveness for his sin, whose sins are covered from God's face, whose debt is cancelled in God's grace.

There's no deceit in him. So we'll sing Psalm 32 from the beginning down to the verse mark 7. Do you stand to sing? And we'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

Amen. When I kept silent, all my bones were thrown in heaven.

I felt entrapped. Both day and night, my strength was up, as in a summer drought.

[4 : 21] Then I laid bare my sin to you, the guilt that lay within. I said, O Lord, I have transgressed, and you forgive when I confess. You pardoned all my sin.

So let the Godly pray to you, while you are to be found.

Surely, when waves are sweeping past, and mighty waters rising fast, you keep them safe and sound.

You are my hiding place, O Lord, my true security.

You keep me safe and troubled days. You circle me with joyful praise, when you have set me free.

[6 : 25] Amen. Amen. Well, let us come before the Lord in prayer. Let's pray together.

Gracious God and loving Heavenly Father, enable us this evening, as we meet together in worship, to first of all be still, to be still and to know that thou art God.

Help us, Lord, we pray, to come aside from all the business of the day, and even the busyness of our week, and to just stop, and to be still in the Lord's presence, and to know that the promise remains true for thy people, that where two or three gather in thy name, thou art there in the midst of them.

And that our prayer, Lord, as we meet together, is that thou wouldst be pleased to bless us. And as the psalm has said, Lord, bless and pity us. Shine on us with thy face, that the earth, thy way, and nations all would know thy saving grace.

And tonight we bless and praise thee for knowing the saving grace of God in our life, to know that we have been brought from darkness, and to thine own marvelous light, that we can say that we were once not a people, but we are now the people of God.

[7 : 51] We are those who had once not obtained mercy, but now we have obtained mercy. And what a mercy it is to know that God has been gracious and merciful towards us.

He has been long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth. And it is no wonder that David praised the Lord in that psalm that we were singing. And he said, how blessed is the one who has received forgiveness for his sin.

And tonight, Lord, help us to see that we are a people who are blessed. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

We have received what we do not deserve. And the Lord has kept from us what we do deserve.

That he has been so good to us. That he has drawn us to himself.

That he has called us with that holy calling. That he has made known to us the wonder and beauty of thy Son, the Lord Jesus. And we thank thee tonight for him.

[8 : 50] We thank thee, O Lord, that he is a faithful friend. He is a friend that sticks closer than a brother. He is our shepherd who leads us in every step of the way of life. He is there for us even when we have to be confronted with the valley of the shadow of death.

That he is the one who is by our side. He is the one who assures us that his goodness and his mercy, they still follow us all the days of our life. And that in God's house forevermore our dwelling place shall be.

And so, Lord, whatever or however we felt coming in here this evening. However we felt in and of ourselves. That how often, Lord, we look at ourselves and we see how sinful we are.

And that we are not becoming more holy. But we feel that we are becoming more and more sinful.

And yet, Lord, we find ourselves confessing more and more with the Apostle. That the good that I would, I do not.

But the evil that I would not, that is what I keep on doing. But, Lord, help us, we pray, to see tonight that there is and there remains, therefore now no condemnation, to those who are in Christ Jesus.

[9 : 59] That we are those who have been given that spirit of adoption. Whereby we are able to cry and call upon our Father which art in heaven. And to know that he hears us and he answers us in accordance with his will.

Help us, Lord, we pray, to be persuaded. As Paul was persuaded. That neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers. Nor things present, nor even things to come.

Neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature. Is able to separate us from the love of God. That is in Christ Jesus our Lord. And so, Lord, our prayer is, as we meet together as weak.

Saints traveling through this world. Help us, Lord, to be encouraged by thy word. Help us, Lord, to be lifted up to see Jesus. That while we are looking at him, that, oh, as one of old said, that for every look at self, to take ten looks at Jesus.

And that we might keep looking at him. That we might keep focusing upon him. Knowing that he is the lover of our soul. He is the fairest among ten thousand. He is the one who was wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities.

[11 : 11] And help us then, we pray, to see more and more of him. That he would increase. That we would decrease. That he would ultimately have all the preeminence. That thou, our heavenly Father, would have all the glory.

And that we, tonight, as we gather around thy word. And as we seek thy face. That, Lord, that we would know blessing. That we would experience thy presence.

That we would know the power of thy spirit. As thy word is opened. And as thy word is read. And as it is proclaimed. Lord, that thou wouldst open our ears to hear.

Open our hearts to receive thy truth. Open our minds to engage with it. But, Lord, enable us, we pray, as thy people. Not only to be hearers of thy word. To be doers also.

To be living it out. And to be living epistles. Seen and read of those around us. That we, O Lord, would do it ultimately for thy glory. And the furtherance of thy kingdom.

[12:09] Bless us, Lord, we pray, then, as thy children. Remember this congregation. That we thank thee for them. That thou wouldst strengthen them and sustain them. Uphold them and support them. Remember the minister, Lord.

We thank thee for him. We pray for our brother, Calamurdo. Grant him, Lord, to know thy presence. To know thy nearness. And that even as he would enjoy a communion season.

With his own people here. Bless him, Lord, we pray. Remember his wife, Joanne, and their family. And we pray, Lord, even for the vacancy in the congregation. That thou wouldst provide for them. Not only an under-shepherd. But also a brother to work alongside Calamurdo. One who will serve alongside him. One who will seek to lift up the name of Jesus.

Encourage them, Lord, we pray, in the work of the gospel. That as they plough their furrow. And as they seek to break up the fallow ground. And as they seek to invite people to come and hear this glorious gospel message.

[13:09] Our longing is that more would be won to Christ. That more and more would taste and see that thou art good. And trust in thee and be blessed. And Lord, remember us then, we pray this evening.

Remember those who are not with us. Those who are confined to homes or to beds of sickness. Those, Lord, who are laid aside. Those whose longing and heart's desire is to be here.

And yet, Lord, they are confined to their homes. Or wherever they may be. But, Lord, we ask that thou wouldst meet with them. At their point of need. And, Lord, we pray also for homes and families that are separated by the gospel.

We pray for husbands that are out of Christ. Or wives that are still strangers to grace and to God. Or children that are on the broad road. That leads to destruction.

Lord, our longing is that the prodigals would come home. That they too would be found here on a Friday evening. Seeking to worship the Lord. Seeking to lift up his name. Seeking to glorify and enjoy him forever.

[14:10] For that is our chief end. O Lord, bless us then, we pray. Lead us and guide us by thy spirit. And go before us in all things. Taking away our iniquity. And receiving us graciously.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. But we're going to sing again. This time in Psalm 119. Psalm 119. It's in the Scottish Psalter, page 399. Psalm 119. We're singing from the beginning down to the verse marked 6. As you know, Psalm 119.

It's the longest psalm in the Psalter. And for good reason. It's a psalm that reminds us about the importance of God's word in our life. That God's word is to be central to our life.

And when God's word is central to our life. As the psalmist reminds us there. We are blessed. He says there in verse 1. Blessed are they that undefiled and straight are in the way.

[15:14] Who in the Lord's most holy law do walk and do not stray. Blessed are they who to observe his statutes are inclined. And who do seek the living God with their whole heart and mind.

So we're singing Psalm 119 from the beginning down to the verse marked 6. It's on page 399.

We're singing to the tune Jackson. And we'll stand to sing if you're able.

To God's praise. Blessed are they that undefiled and straight are in the way.

Who in the Lord's most holy law do walk and do not stray.

Blessed are they who to observe his statutes are inclined.

[16:20] And who do seek the living God with their whole heart and mind.

Such endless ways to walk and lay. To know any clergy.

Thou hast commanded us to keep thy footsteps carefully.

O that thy statutes to observe. Thou wouldst my ways silent.

Then shall I not be shamed when I by three steps always pray.

[17:26] Amen. We're now going to read the word of God.

As we find it in Paul's letter to the Ephesians and chapter 1. Paul's letter to the Ephesians. And chapter 1.

Ephesians chapter 1, we're going to read the whole chapter together.

So let us hear the word of God. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

[19:19] Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[20 : 39] Amen. Amen. in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who fills all in all.

And so on, may the Lord bless that reading of his own holy word. We're now going to sing again before we consider that passage in Ephesians chapter one.

We're going to sing again. And I want to apologize to Ali before I open my mouth. It's Psalm 89, I should have said to Ali. I don't know why I wrote 78. I hope that's okay, Ali.

That's good. Psalm 89, it's at verse 15. When I had turned to Psalm 78, I was looking at it thinking, why on earth did I choose that Psalm?

[21 : 46] It's not what I was wanting us to sing. So Psalm 89, it's on page 345. It's in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 89.

And we're singing from verse 15 down to the verse marked 18. And the reason we're going to sing Psalm 89 is because it reminds us that as a people, we are a blessed people.

Not only blessed, we are greatly blessed. That's what the psalmist reminds us in verse 15. O greatly blessed the people are, the joyful sound that know. In brightness of thy face, O Lord, they ever on shall go.

They in thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly. And in thy righteousness shall they, exalted, be on high. So we'll sing Psalm 89 from verse 15 down to the verse marked 18.

And we'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise. Amen. O greatly blessed the people are, the joyful sound that know, and brightness of thy face, O Lord, they ever on shall go.

[23 : 19] They in thy name shall all the day rejoice exceedingly.

And in thy righteousness shall they, and in thy righteousness shall they, exalted be on high.

because the glory of their strength, doth only stand in thee.

and in thy faith shall our horn, and power exalted be.

for God is our own. For God is our own. He begs and thee, to us doth safety bring.

[24 : 42] The holy one of Israel, is our almighty King.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, if we could, this evening, with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of scripture that we read, Paul's letter to the Ephesians, and chapter 1.

Ephesians chapter 1. And if we read again in verse 3. Actually, we'll just read from the beginning.

Where Paul writes, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Blessed be the God and Father, of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

[25 : 58] And so on. If I were to ask you this evening, how are you? How would you answer?

Would you slap on a smile and give the generic answer that we almost always give to almost everyone? Would you just say, I'm fine, Murdo?

Not bad, Murdo? But you know, more often than not, the truth is we're not fine because we're all struggling in some way. We're all struggling with sin or with sickness or with stress or with stress or sorrow or separation.

We're not fine because we're all broken people living broken lives in this broken world. But even though we're broken people, Paul reminds us that, as believers, we are blessed people.

We're blessed people. You know, when I was studying in the Free Church College, which wasn't yesterday, I was there with a private student and every time I saw this private student and I asked him the question I've just asked all of you, I would ask him, how are you?

[27 : 12] And he would say it to me in his strong Glaswegian accent, and I'm not going to try his Glaswegian accent, he would say, Murdo, my friend, I'm blessed. Murdo, my friend, I'm blessed.

Because you know, despite his struggles, and he had many of them, he was sure of who he was in Christ. And that as a child of God, he had received, as Paul writes, he had received every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

And that's where Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians, because Paul wants to remind us and reassure us this evening of how we are tonight as believers. So that when someone asks you, how are you?

You're not to give the generic answer that you always give. Paul tells us that we are to respond and say, I'm blessed. I'm blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

And that's what I want us to see this evening from this passage as we consider three things. We consider, first of all, all the believers, then all the blessings, and then all the benefits. So there are three headings, all the believers, all the blessings, and all the benefits.

[28 : 24] So first of all, all the believers, we see that in verses 1 and 2. Paul writes there, he says, Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful in Christ Jesus, grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, the word Ephesus means desirable, because the ancient city of Ephesus was a desirable place to live. Ephesus was this wealthy seaport city situated along the southwest coast of what is now modern-day Turkey.

And as a seaport city, the city of Ephesus that had built up its reputation as this key trade route along the Aegean Sea, so much so that Ephesus became this important and influential city within the Roman Empire.

Sadly, Ephesus was also known for its idolatry. They had built a temple double the size of any other temple around them to this Greek goddess Diana, making it what's been known as one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

It was also known for its immorality because as an idolatrous city, that often meant two things. It meant temple priests and also temple prostitutes, making Ephesus nothing more than what it was, sin city.

[29 : 47] And yet around 54 AD, it was into that dark context and culture of idolatry and immorality that the Lord directed Paul to plant a church and to place a lampstand in this what was a cosmopolitan and even a commercial seaport city of Ephesus.

And Paul remained there. He stayed there for about two to three years where he challenged and confronted their idolatry and all their immorality. And by God's grace, many of the Ephesians, they turned away from their idolatry, they left their immorality, and they began worshipping the living and through God.

In fact, the gospel had such an impact and such an influence upon the church in Ephesus that they became this church that was a light. They were a church that was a light in darkness.

And for that reason, Paul's letter to the Ephesians, in many ways, it's a unique letter because it's a letter unlike many of his other letters. As you know, in all of his other letters, Paul is addressing and dealing with division or heresy or false teaching or counterfeit Christianity.

But in the letters of the Ephesians, Paul doesn't deal with any of those problems because as a church, this church, as we said, was a light. But the Ephesians, they just seemed to be faithfully plowing away in their furrow.

[31 : 12] The Ephesians were faithfully plowing away in their furrow. And yet Paul writes to them because as a seasoned pastor and preacher of the gospel, Paul always knew that when things are going well, there's always this temptation to lose focus and to forget the Lord.

That's why he encourages and even exhorts the Ephesians throughout this entire letter. And you know, it's actually a beautiful letter. It's a letter that's split and you could see it's separated into two halves.

It's a game of two halves, the letter to the Ephesians. Because chapters 1 to 3, Paul is teaching. Chapters 4 to 6, Paul is telling. Chapters 1 to 3 are full of information.

Chapters 4 to 6, full of application. Chapters 1 to 3 are full of indicatives. 4 to 6 are full of imperatives. Chapters 1 to 3 are full of encouragements.

And chapters 4 to 6 are full of exhortations. Because Paul, he encourages here all the believers at Ephesus and us here this evening. And he does so by reminding us about all the blessings and all the benefits of salvation in chapter 1.

[32 : 25] He tells us that we're saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, in chapter 2. He tells us all about the length and the breadth and the depth and the height of God's love that has been displayed and demonstrated towards us in Jesus Christ.

He does that in chapter 3. So chapters 1 to 3, they're full of encouragements for the Christian. And then chapters 4 to 6, they're full of exhortations to the Christian.

Because as Christians, Paul tells us in chapter 4, that we are to walk worthy of the calling to which we have been called. In chapter 5, he tells us that we are to live our lives as children of God, imitating our Heavenly Father.

And in chapter 6, he tells us that we're to stand firm against the wiles of the devil by wearing the whole armor of God. You know, Paul's letter to the Ephesians, it's a beautiful letter full of encouragement, full of exhortation.

But as you know tonight, as Christians who are struggling, we need encouragement. We seek encouragement this evening, even as we prepare to come to the Lord's table.

[33 : 39] Because, you know, regardless of who we are, we all need encouragement. We all need to be reminded of the great and precious promises of God's Word. We all need to be reassured of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

And that's what Paul does here. Right from the outset of his letter, he seeks to encourage all the believers in the city of Ephesus. And he seeks to encourage all the believers tonight in the town of Stornoway.

And he does so by reminding us and reassuring us of all the blessings that we have in Christ. And that's what we see secondly. We see all the blessings.

So he talks about, first of all, all the believers and then all the blessings. All the blessings, secondly. He says there in verse 3, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.

You know, when I was in school, there was one subject that I hated and that was English. I loved maths, I loved physics, I loved chemistry, but I hated English.

[34 : 51] And I'm sorry if you're an English teacher here tonight. But the thing is, I could never get my head around writing proper paragraphs. And I could never get my head around using punctuation.

Because I would write all these long sentences with no paragraphs and little punctuation. It would just be, this happened and then that happened and then and then and then and then and then.

And I always got into trouble for it. Never got good marks when it came to English. But you know, when I come to Ephesians chapter 1, I take comfort. And I take comfort because verses 3 down to the verse 14, they have no paragraphs and they have no punctuation.

Verses 3 to 14, it's one long sentence. In the original language, it's one long sentence. Now as you know, the average length of a sentence is about 15 to 20 words.

But this sentence, it's 10 times that. Because I've counted, it's 203 words in Greek and it's 244 words in English.

[35 : 58] It's one long sentence. And of course, all our Bible, our modern Bible versions, they seek to try and tidy up Paul's sentence by adding in all the paragraphs and adding in all the punctuation.

But when Paul penned this, or these verses originally, when he penned this sentence to the Ephesians, there were no paragraphs. There was no punctuation.

It was just one long sentence. In fact, it's the longest sentence in the Bible. But Paul wrote this one long sentence, not because of his lack of education like me, but because he was full of excitement. Paul was full of excitement about what he's writing. Because in this long sentence, Paul is describing all the blessings that all believers receive in and through Jesus Christ.

And that's how he begins this long sentence. He says there in verse 3, blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

[37 : 04] And you see the emphasis on the word blessed. Now this word blessed, it's a beautiful word. It's a beautiful word. And you know, I often feel that we, it's a word that we misunderstand and it's often a word that is misused by people.

Because the word bless or blessed literally means to kneel. It literally means to kneel. And you know, it's a word that gives to us this picture, this, it portrays to us this image, this illustration of a king.

A king standing up from his throne. And before the king is his subject or his servant. And this servant has, he's adopted this position and posture of kneeling in submission and surrender before his king.

And of course, for Paul, the king is obviously King Jesus. Because, as Paul tells us, he's the king of kings. He's the Lord of lords. And when King Jesus, he describes, when he stands up from his throne and sinners are in his presence.

He says, sinners are to assume and adopt the position and posture of kneeling. Kneeling in submission and surrender. And we are to kneel. And this is the description he's given.

[38 : 25] We are to kneel with our head bowed and our hand outstretched. And our hand is to be outstretched in order to receive from the hand of King Jesus something that we don't deserve.

That's how we're to come. That's what blessing is. Because when our head is bowed and our hand is outstretched and we're receiving something from the gracious hand of King Jesus, what we don't deserve, Jesus graciously, lovingly, and mercifully gives it to us.

He blesses us. That's what the word blessing means. He blesses us. When we are on our knee before King Jesus, blessing comes to us from his hand.

Blessing only comes, my friend, from the hand of King Jesus. And this is why Paul writes this one long sentence. Because he's full of excitement. He's full of excitement and he wants to encourage all these believers in Ephesus and in Stornoway tonight.

He wants to remind them and reassure them of all the blessings that we have graciously and lovingly and mercifully received from the hand of King Jesus. He says, Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

[39 : 47] And you know, I think it's important that we also stress the word every. Not only the word blessed but the word every. Because in Paul's words of excitement and encouragement to us as believers, he says that we've been blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

There is nothing lacking. It's every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ. And I stress the every and I think it's important because you know, there are many Christians, not reformed Christians, I hope, but there are many Christians that will tell you that you're not a proper Christian until you have received the second blessing and you can speak in tongues.

And you know, I'll never forget Dr. Steve Lawson's answer when he was asked by a Pentecostal pastor, have you received the second blessing? Have you received the second blessing?

And Steve Lawson said, yes, and the third blessing, and the fourth blessing, and the fifth blessing. In fact, he said, I have received, as Paul tells us, every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ.

My friend, you know, all believers, they receive all the blessings in and through Jesus Christ. And what Paul is encouraging us here, what Paul is excited to tell us about tonight is that there is nothing lacking in your salvation.

[41 : 20] You have received all of it graciously, mercifully, and lovingly from the hand of King Jesus. And you know, in order to emphasize and even explain the beauty of this blessing, Paul repeatedly uses one of the shortest words in this long sentence.

It's one of the shortest words in the longest sentence. He focuses upon the word blessed, the word every, but also the short word in. In.

In fact, he uses the word in 13 times in this one long sentence. And when you read through the sentence, and I want you to read through it, because this is all that you have.

This is all that you've received. When you read through this sentence, you see that Paul repeatedly says that all believers, they have graciously, mercifully, and lovingly received all the blessings from the hand of King Jesus because they're in Christ.

They're in him. And they're in the beloved. We are in Christ. We're in him. And we're in the beloved. And you know, it's often said that large doors swing on small hinges.

[42 : 32] And in the Bible, large theological truths swing on small words. And you can't get much smaller than the word in. In Christ. And with this small word, Paul is, he's reminding us, he's reassuring us that as a Christian, as a Christian tonight, you are blessed.

You're not fine. You're not okay. You are blessed, my friend. And you're blessed not because of who you are or what you've done or what you've achieved in life. You are blessed because you've graciously and lovingly and mercifully received all the blessings from the hand of King Jesus. And as we said, Paul repeatedly uses this one small word in the longest sentence in order to emphasize the beauty of our blessing. And he does this, you know, the reason he does that is

because, you know, what we often forget or even fail to remember is that when this letter was written, it was written to be read audibly.

They didn't have Bibles. They couldn't read. So when this letter was written, it was written to be read audibly. It was written to be read out loud. And as you know, when someone is speaking audibly, repetition is important in order to make an emphasis.

Repetition is important in order to make an emphasis. That's what a preacher does. That's what Paul does here. He repeatedly uses the word in. And he does so in order to emphasize that all the believers receive all the blessings because we're in Christ.

[44 : 07] We receive all the, all the believers receive all the blessings because we're in Christ. and that our salvation is precious and our salvation is personal because we are in Christ.

We have this union with Christ. And for Paul, he stresses the in because he loves the doctrine of union with Christ. And he writes about it in almost all of his letters because Paul knows that our union with Christ, our being united to Jesus Christ is what underlies every aspect of our salvation. And that every spiritual blessing, it flows to us and it follows behind us because we're in Christ. We're in Christ.

You know, one theologian put it this way and you know, I read this quote a number of years ago. I don't know who wrote it but I've never forgotten it because he said that union with Christ is the fountainhead from which every spiritual blessing flows down to the Christian.

Repentance and faith, pardon, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and glorification. It's all ours because we're in Christ.

[45 : 29] You know, Paul here, he's excited. He wants to encourage us this evening because when you're a Christian, when you're a Christian, everything you have as a Christian and everything you are as a Christian is because you're in Christ.

You're in union with Christ. You're united to Jesus Christ and you can say tonight with Solomon, my beloved is mine and I am his. My beloved is mine and I am his because I am in Christ.

And here Paul, he reminds us and reassures us that all the believers, they experience all the blessings and they enjoy all the benefits because we're in Christ.

All the believers experience all the blessings and enjoy all the benefits because we're in Christ. And that's what I want us to think about lastly. All the benefits. All the benefits. All the believers, all the blessings and all the benefits.

All the benefits. Look at verse 3 again. blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ 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 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 you know in this one long sentence with over 200 words Paul is excited he wants to encourage by speaking seeking to show us that God the Father has blessed us he has graciously given us all these gifts through our union with his beloved and his only begotten son Jesus Christ and when Paul lists all these gracious and glorious gifts that have come from God the Father he begins where God began because God began with our election because our election as you know it's all of grace where as Paul writes we were and Peter writes we were elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father but the truth is God didn't have to choose any of us in fact there was no reason why he chose any of us there was nothing good in us nothing gracious about us nothing great that we had done that God would ever choose us and yet he chose us even as he chose us Paul writes in him he chose us in him before the foundation of the world that we should be holy and blameless before him and in love he writes he predestined us because our predestination as well as our election it's all of grace in love he writes verse 5 he predestined us for adoption 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 in other words the gracious benefits of our election our predestination our predestination and our effectual calling they are our adoption into the family of God our justification before a holy God and our sanctification to be conformed to the image of God and it's all according to the purpose of his will it's all according to the praise of his glorious grace because he has blessed us he has blessed us in the beloved but there's more because all the blessings and all the benefits for all believers Paul says they just keep on flowing towards us he says verse 7 in him we have redemption in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace it's all of grace he says from beginning to end it's all as I was taught in

[49 : 36] Sunday school in Melbost a long time ago it's all g-r-a-c-e God's riches at Christ's expense it's all of grace we've been redeemed not with corruptible things such as silver and gold but by the precious blood of Christ which verse 8 which he has 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 do you know my friend our perseverance and our preservation as saints in other words the fact that we are kept it's not our own doing Paul tells us it's all his doing and it's all according to his purpose which he has set forth in Christ it's all of grace the fact that we are kept tonight is all of grace you know we have an elder in Barvis and he always says that the first step after being saved is being kept the first step after being saved is being kept and that's because we are kept as Peter tells us we are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation but you know for Paul in verse 10 there's an end product there's an end purpose because there's a plan and this plan that God has put in place for the fullness of time he says in which our glorification in Christ will see the unification of all things through a new heaven and a new earth he says that in the father's house are many mansions and in him in him we will obtain our inheritance an inheritance that is incorruptible undefiled that fadeth not away but is reserved in heaven for us and you're in these verses from verse 3 just down to verse 11 Paul is reminding us Paul is reassuring us tonight as

Christians that our election our predestination our adoption our justification our sanctification our redemption our redemption our forgiveness our perseverance as saints our glorification and our eternal inheritance in glory it's all of grace and we should never forget it it's all of grace because all the blessings and all the benefits for all believers when we submit and surrender our lives to King Jesus when we come kneeling before him we are given and gifted every spiritual blessing from the gracious merciful and loving hand of this wonderful king and you know you'd think that Paul would stop there and put a full stop in you'd think that he'd draw a breath or put in a semicolon especially once he'd reached out heavenly inheritance but Paul is excited Paul wants to encourage Paul wants to remind us he wants to reassure us of all these glorious and and great gifts and he wants to tell us that they all come to us with a guarantee not a one-year guarantee not a three-year or even a 10-year guarantee but this eternal guarantee because verse 13 in him in union with him when we are united to him he says in him you also when you heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation and believed in him you 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 my friend the holy spirit is your guarantee a guarantee of all these glorious gifts and graces which you have graciously mercifully and lovingly received from the hand of King Jesus they're all yours they're all yours tonight and they're all yours for the whole of time until you draw your last breath and they're all yours for all eternity because you have been blessed in every with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ it's all yours what an encouragement you know when we consider Paul's encouragement that all the believers experience all the blessings and enjoy all these benefits because we're in Christ we're in union with Christ you know it's no one no wonder Paul concluded his words of encouragement at the end of chapter 3 with that beautiful benediction there even at verse 20 he's encouraged the believers he's reminded them of every spiritual blessing that's theirs he's reminded them that they're saved by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone he's reminded them that they are loved absolutely loved the length and breadth and depth and height of God's love has been revealed and demonstrated to them in Christ and what does he say he gives this beautiful benediction now unto him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all more than we could ask or even think according to the power there is at work in us unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages world without end amen what blessings we have received my friend what benefits we enjoy all because we are believers we are believers in the church by God's grace and God's goodness and so if on the way out of church tonight someone asks you how are you what are you going to tell them are you going to say I'm fine I'm not bad no no my friend you're going to tell them the truth of who you are in Christ you're going to say I'm blessed my life not me might not be the way I wanted it to turn out I've gone through providences that I never expected but still I'm blessed I'm blessed with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places in Christ I'm blessed and if that's your testimony my friend and you've never sat at the Lord's table then that's where you should be sitting this coming Lord's day may the Lord bless these thoughts to us let us pray our Father in heaven we bow in thy presence realizing that everything we have and everything we are is in and through thy Son the Lord Jesus and help us we pray not only to see the blessings but to see the benefactor to see the one who bestows every

blessing upon us that we might keep looking to him and keep lifting our eyes towards him that as we kneel before him in worship as we adore him day by day and as we walk with him through every providence in life help us Lord to know that we still have every blessing they are ours for time and for eternity encourage us we pray lift us up we ask lift us up Lord to see more and more of Jesus and to see less and less of self help us Lord to see his glory that we might see the glory as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth hear us then we pray part us with thy blessing we ask for we ask it in Jesus name and for his sake

Amen we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this evening we're going to sing the words of Psalm 133 Psalm 133 it's in the Sing Psalms version on page 175 Psalm 133 Psalm 133 page 175 we're singing the whole psalm Psalm 133 it's a psalm that I'm sure we're familiar with but it's a psalm that asks the question how does the blessing come?

how does blessing come? and it comes when God's people come together in unity and seek to live for God's glory they live as they should that's how the blessing comes that's what the psalmist tells us how excellent a thing it is how pleasant and how good when brothers dwell in unity and live as brothers should for it is like the precious oil poured out on Aaron's head that running over down his beard upon his collar spread like Herman's dew and Herman's dew was like rain wasn't dew that we get it poured like rain that's what he wants he wants God's blessing God's outpouring like Herman's dew upon the hill of Zion it descends the Lord bestows his blessing there the life that never ends we'll sing the whole psalm and we'll stand to sing if you're able to God's praise how excellent a thing it is how pleasant and how good how pleasant and how good when brothers dwell when brothers dwell in unity and live as brothers should and live as brothers should and live as brothers should and live as brothers should for it is like the precious oil poured out on Aaron's head poured out on Aaron's head that running over down his beard upon his collar spread upon his collar spread upon his collar spread upon his collar spread like Herman's dew upon the hill of Zion it descends of Zion it descends the Lord bestows his blessing there the life that never ends the life that never ends the life that never ends the life that never ends the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore

[62 : 01] Amen Amen Amen