

# According to the Riches of His Grace

9/4/2022

Sermon 3

Ephesians Series

Ephesians 1:7–14 (CSB)

<sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace <sup>8</sup>that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding. <sup>9</sup>He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure that he purposed in Christ <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the right time—to bring everything together in Christ, both things in heaven and things on earth in him.

<sup>11</sup>In him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will, <sup>12</sup>so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to his glory.

<sup>13</sup>In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. <sup>14</sup>The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

Introduction: Are there any professed “procrastinators” here?

A. Some people are simply wired to always be late and to always put off until the last minute what they should have done beforehand.

1. Thankfully, God isn't a procrastinator.
2. Paul, in Ephesians, uses the highest language possible to talk about His God in these first verses of Ephesians.
3. In these verses, Paul reminds us that God is never late.

B. Paul talks about the “fullness of time”, “mystery”, and “predestined” throughout these verses.

1. These words do not describe a God who is “playing” catchup.
2. He is not late, or behind, or surprised.
3. Instead, God is purposeful, intentional, and planned in what He is doing.

C. That includes what God is giving.

1. Today, Paul’s verses speak to what God has planned for and provided His people.
2. Redemption, Inheritance, and a down-payment are some of what Paul describes in these verses that God has given us.
3. Let’s look at: **What God Gives, The Measure He Gives with, and the Means of His Giving.**

## 1. God Gives Redemption

A. This is one of several words Paul uses in this passage that has a legal tone, with a financial coloring.

1. Before redemption was a theological word, it was a common word.
2. Often, we think of “redeem” as a verb: I redeem a coupon for a discount or I redeem a ticket for entrance into a concert.
3. To redeem is viewed as an action to “ransom”, with the replacement of one thing for another.

B. But in this text, Paul uses a noun instead of a verb.

1. A verb is an action word.
2. A noun is a person, place, thing, or idea.
3. Here, Paul is talking about the “NOUN” of Redemption.
4. In other words, Paul is not referring to what was enacted, but what was given.

5. "In him we have redemption"...

6. Through Jesus, and in Jesus, we have redemption.

C. Redemption from what?

1. Sin.

2. Paul would have had in mind the 3 great redemptions in human history.

a. The first was the redeeming of Israel from Egypt through the Exodus.

1. Israel was enslaved in Egypt for 400 years.

2. But God "redeemed" them from their slavery and set them free.

b. The second was the redeeming of Israel from exile and slavery to Babylon.

1. Because of Israel's sin, she was "sold" into bondage to Babylon for 70 years.

2. But at the appointed time, God redeemed Israel once again and returned her to her land.

c. The third great redemption: The sacrifice of Jesus upon the cross to free humanity from the bondage of sin and death.

3. To have in our possession this redemption in Jesus means we are no longer enslaved to sin, but free to live for Jesus. (Romans 6)

D. Through Jesus, you are in possession of redemption,

1. Your "freedom" ticket has been punched and given to you, to live for Jesus.

2. This is why we must be careful how we live!

3. Because, through Jesus, we have been redeemed from sin, and have redemption in Christ Jesus.

## 2. God gives an Inheritance

A. God doesn't stop with redemption, but He also gives us an inheritance.

Ephesians 1:11–12 (CSB)

<sup>11</sup> In him we have also received an inheritance, because we were predestined according to the plan of the one who works out everything in agreement with the purpose of his will, <sup>12</sup> so that we who had already put our hope in Christ might bring praise to his glory.

1. **Inheritance is all about relationship.**

2. We do not inherit from people we do not know.

a. In fact, there are many instances when people bypass their own blood family and give to someone else because that person had a relationship with them, when blood family did not.

b. We receive our inheritance on the basis of relationship.

B. The language Paul uses refers to a mutual benefit.

1. In fact, the Greek refers to language referring to "a person's lot or portion".

2. It's the same language used in Deuteronomy and elsewhere that declared that Israel was God's portion and prize.

3. Far from this being solely about the recipient, **the inheritance is first of all about the giver.**

C. Paul uses all sorts of language that gives praise and glory to God and Jesus, not us.

1. We did not earn the inheritance.

2. We did not deserve God's grace and blessing.

3. We did nothing but receive what was offered, through Jesus.

4. The greatness of the gift is not dependent upon us!

D. Think of this:

1. God gives us redemption, and then gives us an inheritance that is reciprocal: He is OUR God and we are His People.
2. And then, to make prove that the inheritance was real and true, He gives us a down-payment of that inheritance.

### 3. God Gives the Spirit: The Seal and Down Payment

<sup>13</sup>In him you also were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and when you believed. <sup>14</sup>The Holy Spirit is the down payment of our inheritance, until the redemption of the possession, to the praise of his glory.

A. Paul gives two images or illustrations to demonstrate what the Holy Spirit does at salvation.

1. When we give our lives to Jesus, God gives us redemption and freedom from sin.
2. He brings us into the family of God, and thus the inheritance.
3. Then the Holy Spirit is given as both a seal and an earnest deposit.

B. What does the seal mean?

"In the ancient world the seal was the personal sign of the owner or the sender of something important, and thus, as in a letter, it distinguished what was true from what was spurious."<sup>1</sup>

1. The personal sign of the owner...
2. How do we experience our redemption, and blessing, and inheritance here on Earth?

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<sup>1</sup> Foulkes, Francis. 1989. Ephesians: An Introduction and Commentary. Vol. 10. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

a. The Holy Spirit living in us is a seal that says this is FROM God and this salvation is genuine.

b. Holy Spirit in your life is God's proof that this is true and real.

3. **The Holy Spirit is God's stamp of ownership on you.**

a. The Holy Spirit is the Christian's seal. The experience of the Holy Spirit in their lives is the final proof to them, and indeed a demonstration to others, of the genuineness of what they have believed, and provides the inward assurance that they belong to God as children<sup>2</sup>.

b. When the world looks at you, they should see the mark of the Holy Spirit upon your life, knowing you are the real deal.

4. Deny the Holy Spirit, you deny the authenticity of what Jesus has done.

C. **The Holy Spirit is also an earnest deposit or down-payment.**

1. Again, we see a financial image here.

a. When buying property, we have to put down money in earnest:

b. It means we are serious and there is more coming.

c. One writer says, "The gift of the Spirit, then, is the guarantee of coming immortality."<sup>3</sup>

1. How do I know Jesus is real, and that Eternal life awaits me?

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce, F. F. 1984. [\*The Epistles to the Colossians, to Philemon, and to the Ephesians\*](#). The New International Commentary on the New Testament. Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

2. Because I'm enjoying a down-payment of that eternal life NOW.

2. There is also another image connected with this "guarantee".

a. In its earliest usage, the word we use for down-payment was related to the idea of an engagement ring (footnote in Bruce).

b. When you put a ring on it, you come back for it!

c. Scripture is full of wedding imagery:

1. Jesus said "If I go to prepare a place for you, I will come again and bring you to myself."

2. The Holy Spirit reminds us that Jesus is coming back for us.

3. And when He comes back, we will be united in a much fuller and beautiful way than ever before.

4. You see, this is the down-payment, the guarantee, the earnest deposit, but don't wait: EVEN MORE IS COMING.

#### 4. How God Gives:

A. Paul says that God gives "according to the riches of his grace".

1. I came across this illustration that help

Think of it this way: John D. Rockefeller was the richest man in the world, the richest man America had ever produced. If Rockefeller wished to give of his riches there were two ways he could — *according to* his riches, or *from* his riches. History records that he most often did the latter, giving from his riches. The most famous picture of Rockefeller shows him as a wizened old man, dressed in a top hat and cut-away coat giving a dime to some little waif. Rockefeller reportedly did this again and again for the press to dutifully photograph. One wonders how many boys were truly set on the road to wealth and moral excellence by a wonderful gift *from* Rockefeller's fortune.

But think what it would have been like had he given *according to* his riches. If he had done that, he would have perhaps given a grand home, say the famous greystone Kykiut on the family estate Pocantico, and for the living room a Gilbert Stuart or George Washington, a Rodin for the lawn, and a forest, and a Dusenbergs for the carriage house.<sup>4</sup>

2. God does not give "From" his riches.

3. God gives according to them.

B. "When God gives "in accordance with the riches of [his] grace" he gives from his unlimited treasure-house."<sup>5</sup>

1. What we have to give is limited.

2. But what God gives is unlimited:

a. He isn't running out of grace.

b. He isn't overwhelmed with miracle requests.

c. He isn't trying to balance heaven's budget to make sure you get what you need.

3. Not only that, He does not give in a limited manner.

a. Luke 6:38 says that God gives us a good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.

b. We have to stop treating God as if He has the same limitations you do.

c. When God gives, He gives ACCORDING to His riches.

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<sup>4</sup> Hughes, R. Kent. 1990. [\*Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ\*](#). Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

<sup>5</sup> Hughes, R. Kent. 1990. [\*Ephesians: The Mystery of the Body of Christ\*](#). Preaching the Word. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books.

C. Nothing expresses this better than the means with which God provided all of this:

## 5. The Means: Through His Blood

A. Notice the means Paul talks about:

1. "In him we have redemption through his blood..."
2. The Apostle Peter said : 1 Peter 1:18–19 (CSB)

<sup>18</sup>For you know that you were redeemed from your empty way of life inherited from your ancestors, not with perishable things like silver or gold, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of an unblemished and spotless lamb.

B. The most precious resource ever given is not gold, diamonds, platinum, or anything of that sort.

1. But the most precious substance was the blood of Jesus that was shed for me.
2. Sinless, perfect, pure, and it, alone, could provide forgiveness of our sins.
  - a. Only the blood of Jesus can give us repentance, setting us free from slavery to sin and death.
  - b. Only the blood of Jesus can give us an inheritance that is far grander than anything any earthly father can pass along.
  - c. Only the blood of Jesus opens the doors to eternal life and relationship with God.

C. There is no blessing or anything good apart from the sacrifice of Jesus.

1. But BECAUSE JESUS HAS DIED, and BECAUSE HIS BLOOD WAS SHED, we can experience every blessing that God has provided.

2. And it is not an imposition for us to ask God and to lay hold upon those blessings, because God has provided them as our inheritance!!!

Close: An old hymn of the church says:

1. Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!

Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;  
Redeemed through His infinite mercy,  
His child, and forever, I am.

Refrain:

Redeemed, redeemed,  
Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb;  
Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!  
His child, and forever, I am.

2 I think of my blessed Redeemer,  
I think of Him all the day long;  
I sing, for I cannot be silent;  
His love is the theme of my song. [Refrain]

3 I know I shall see in His beauty  
The King in whose law I delight,  
Who lovingly guardeth my footsteps,  
And giveth me songs in the night. [Refrain]

2. I really think that many of us underestimate God's love for us.

a. If nothing else, may this sermon catch us off guard so that we may pay attention to all that has already been done for us.

- b. May we not take for granted Christ's love for us.
- c. May we not be ignorant of the blessings and benefits made available through the Blood of Jesus.

3. What do we do from here?

- a. Today, I want to invite all who would like prayer today to come to the front in just a minute.
- b. If you are tired, and a nap won't fix it, I want to pray for you.
- c. If you are struggling, I want us to pray for you.
- d. If you need healing in your body, would you come to pray this morning.
- d. If you want to draw closer to Jesus, I invite you to pray for a few moments this morning.