



The Beautiful Community: Blessing

Key idea:

The Church is the community of blessing, where those who are in Christ and walking in unity receive every spiritual blessing promised by God.

Key text:

Ephesians 1:3–14

Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. ⁴ For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love ⁵ he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will — ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. ⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace ⁸ that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. ⁹ And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment — to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.

¹¹ In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, ¹² in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. ¹³ And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.

Key points:

1. Paul roots the lavish blessing we have been given in the action of the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
2. We have been given a variety of blessings:
 - a. We have been blessed with every spiritual blessing
 - b. We are blessed by being chosen in eternity past
 - c. We are blessed by being redeemed in the present
 - d. We are blessed by knowing the final end of history

- e. We are blessed because our future inheritance is secure
- 3. There is a unity to God's blessings because they are only received by those who are 'in Christ'.
- 4. To fully receive and experience the blessings given in Christ we must walk in unity in a local church.
- 5. We have been blessed to give praise to God for His glory and grace.

Questions for discussion/application:

1. What part of Sunday's teaching stood out most to you? Why?
2. Why does Paul begin the letter to the Ephesians with such a strong note on the blessing of God? How is this related to being a people founded on the Gospel?
3. Why does Paul base blessing in the Being and activity of the Trinity?
4. In this passage, Paul focuses on spiritual blessings in the heavenly realms. How are these related to earthly circumstances? Does God also bless us with earthly, temporal, material blessings? How do these differ from the blessings Paul speaks of in this passage?
5. Why does Paul begin and end the discussion of blessings with a focus on eternity? Why is it important that the blessings I am given in Christ are rooted in eternity?
6. How are the blessings in the passage reflective of the diversity of the Trinity? How are they reflective of the unity of the Trinity?
7. How does Psalm 133 represent blessings as flowing from the Trinity? How do we see God the Father in Psalm 133? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
8. Why does Psalm 133 speak of blessing being commanded where brothers dwell together in unity? Why does a full experience of Trinitarian blessing require community?
9. How does the blessing of God given to His people produce praise for God? How should Christians respond to God's blessing? How could it lead to unbelievers giving praise to God?
10. Who will I call to encourage this week? What specific members of BRCC will I commit before God to call?