

Ephesians 1 (Part1): 1-10 • Our Spiritual Blessings in Christ

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Ephesians chapter 1. The Book of Ephesians is such a lovely letter. We're going to take, what I hope will end up being the first 14 verses here this morning. We'll see how that goes, but let's read through those and then we'll pray and get into it and see what the Lord has for us.

It starts this way, *“¹ Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:*

² Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

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, ⁴ even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love ⁵ he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, ⁶ to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved.

⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹ 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, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ 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, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it^l to the praise of his glory.” (ESV)

Stop there. Let's pray.

Oh, thank you Father for giving us Your Word and the glory of this Word is just amazing. I mean, Lord you moved upon Paul to write some pretty incredible stuff here just even in these first 14 verses.

We pray that our hearts would be able to receive. Give us Lord, spiritual ears. Help us also to see with spiritual eyes. Direct us, Lord, we ask, in Jesus name, amen.

The Book of Ephesians is all about who we are in Christ. You know, the last book we talked about, Galatians, that we went through? It's all about how we are saved and how we trust in Christ alone. Ephesians is all about who we are in Christ, who you are in Christ. And the reason that's important is because we forget. We can be pretty forgetful people actually from time to time. And we forget who we have been created to be, what we have been created to be, and we revert back to who we were before we met Jesus. And we've all done it.

We've all reverted back. We've begun acting like we used to act, living like we used to live, thinking like the rest of the world thinks. Children of a fallen world. We are no longer children of a fallen world. We are not only residents of heaven, we are children of God by adoption.

Paul is going to spend the entirety of this letter reminding us who we are, now that we are in Christ. And that is so incredibly important. We, since we often lose sight of that as I said, begin to see ourselves encumbered by sin.

We begin to look at ourselves as living day to day in a pretty rotten world and worst of all, we see ourselves as powerless to change anything. That's often the way our minds begin to work.

And the enemy works on us, and our circumstances work on us. Our challenges and problems, and then the people of the world begin to yip and yap in our ear. Pretty soon, we believe the lie that we are who we used to be instead of who God has created us now to be. And because we believe that we are in our old circumstances, in our old condition, we begin to live that way and walk out that sort of a reality and, oh my, what a miserable existence that is.

Paul wrote this letter largely to correct you and I on who we are in Christ. And what we're talking about here is giving ourselves, or reminding ourselves, of a biblical view of who you are. A biblical view, because that worldly view isn't going to do you any good.

And Paul wants to remind us that God is doing something amazing if we would just have faith to see it.

Now verses 1 and 2 contain, if you look in your Bible with me, basically what we referred to as the introduction and it is entirely common the way Paul writes to letters of the day.

A typical introduction in a letter back then began with the author's name, his credentials, followed by the recipient of the letter, and then some kind of a greeting of some sort. And of course, in this case, the author is the apostle Paul, his credentials are, "*an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.*"

The recipients are, "*the saints who are in Ephesus,*" and the greeting is in verse two where he says, "*grace to you and (shalom) peace from God, our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

I want to talk for just a moment about his credentials because he says that his credentials are that he is, "*an Apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.*"

We get used to reading that in Paul's letters, but we often don't stop to ponder what it doesn't mean, I guess.

Paul was not an apostle by church vote. He was not an apostle because he had completed some academic program and got enough accumulated credits to get a diploma. And he was certainly not self-appointed.

Paul makes it very clear at the beginning of this letter that he is an apostle by calling. His apostleship, he says, is "*of Christ Jesus and by the Will of God.*"

And that is so incredibly important. No matter who you are and what your ministry may be, it is important for all of us to remember that we are called by the will of God to do what we do.

And the reason it's so important is because trials come along, and if we're not sure of our calling, if we're not sure that God has called us to do what we're doing, then whenever hard things happen, difficult things begin to happen, we're going to naturally question, why am I doing this?

Why am I putting myself in harm's way? Why am I banging my head against a wall? Was this my idea? Because if this was my idea, I think I need to get a better idea. But wait a minute, if this is God's idea, if this is His calling, then I can trust that He's going to give me the grace to carry out that calling. He's going to give me the strength to function in that calling, and He's going to work out these issues. You see, it all comes down to that whole thing of who's in charge.

And if I've been in charge of my own life, if I've basically, like a lot of people in the ministry, have made a career out of it. You hear about that from time to time, people making a career out of the ministry, and I think, oh mercy, Lord help them. People who make the determination to go into the ministry on their own or to do some kind of ministry on their own in their own power, their own direction.

You hear about it if you've read any Jane Austen novels that, they would, a father might raise a couple of boys and he would choose one of them to go into the clergy and he would just choose it.

George Mueller, in fact, in his autobiography, which I think we sell in our bookstore, tells about how his father intended him for the clergy, to be a clergyman. Not because his father was a believer or cared anything about George ministering for the Lord, he wanted his son to have a comfortable living. And a clergyman was one who, usually in that time, he was born in Prussia back in the early 1800s, apparently a clergyman was someone who had a fairly comfortable living, and that's why his father wanted and encouraged him. You need to go into the ministry, you need to become a clergyman.

There was nothing about prayer, there was nothing about calling, there was nothing about here's what the Lord wants me to do. It's like, who's the Lord? This is a job. It's a career.

For Paul the apostle, it was never a job. He was never considered a hireling, which the Bible refers to as someone who's been hired to do a job. Paul said, I wasn't hired to do a job. I was called by the Lord to go into the ministry, and again, that is so vitally important because when hardships arise, and man did they arise in the apostle Paul's life.

The only thing that's going to get you out of bed in the morning and back into the ministry is the knowledge that you've been called by God.

I can tell you in 30 some years of ministry, I've quit several times. Only to, a few hours later, through prayer, remember that, oh wait, I can't quit because this is a calling. God called me. I didn't choose to do this. He called me to do this. And so, I can trust Him. Makes a huge difference.

When I'm talking to a young man or woman who is asking questions about going into the ministry, first thing I ask them every time is, well, has God called you? And if they say, I don't know. Then I say, well, you need to go back and have that conversation with your Lord because you better know. Because the

enemy can sniff out that little bit of doubt. And I'm telling you, he will beat the sparks out of you if he senses that idea that you're not sure. He will make you sure that you're not called if there's some kind of doubt in your own heart and mind. Okay. Enough of that.

Notice the recipients of the letter. He says, *"to the saints who are in Ephesus."* He calls them the faithful in Christ Jesus. The word saint means, set apart one or one who is set apart, right?

According to the Bible, a saint is a believer in Jesus Christ. That means that if Paul had written a letter to our church, in this day and age, he would have said, to the saints who are in Christ Jesus at Calvary Chapel, Ontario. And he would mean all of us who are in the Lord.

And this is another way that God is, through this letter, correcting our mistaken view of who we are. He wants us to know who you are in Jesus. You are a saint. And I know that the world has tried to redefine saint. The world defines it as just a good person. Oh, he's a saint. That's not what it means.

Roman Catholicism has attempted to redefine saint. Mercy! All the requirements that you have to go through to be a saint. The first one I definitely don't like. You have to be dead. And preferably for 5 or more years, although they've made exceptions on that. And then of course there's all these other things that have to happen. You have to prove a life of heroic virtue. There has to be a provable miracle that has happened when someone has invoked your name in prayer. And when these various things line up, then these men go into a holy convocation and determine whether you are a saint.

The Bible knows nothing of that definition. A saint is a believer. You are a set apart one. Set apart for who? God. Set apart for what? Holiness. He's correcting our view, you see. Like a spiritual chiropractor bringing correction, getting us back in line with the truth, right?

And then comes the greeting. *"Grace to you."* "Charis," grace. Unmerited favor. It's a way of just saying, may God favor you apart from your merit. *"And peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ."* And then he begins in verse 3, and by the way, this is probably completely extraneous information. But verses 3 through 14 are one long run on sentence, but that's the apostle Paul.

Do you know the type, the kind of person who talks and never takes a breath? Paul was one of those guys. And your Bible puts periods in there, between

verses 3 and 14 in your English translation to make it a little more readable for you and I and maybe seven hopefully a little more understandable.

But there are none. I mean, this is a, this is one long, run on sentence, which can make it a little challenging to teach, let me just tell you. But enough about my problems. 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.”* Stop there.

The reason I want you to stop there is because this verse here is what we refer to as the focal point or the key. If you underline things in your Bible, I'm not saying you have to, but if you're spiritual, you probably do. That was a low blow. This is a great verse to underline because it is the cornerstone of the whole book.

Paul is going to spend the entirety of the Book of Ephesians defining for you and I, the spiritual blessings that are ours in Christ. Then he's going to talk about how we walk those out in very practical ways. And then the very last chapter of Ephesians, he's going to talk about how we protect these spiritual blessings with the full armor of God.

And so, this is the jumping point, the springboard. Everything flows from here. All right, very important that we see that and I want to emphasize here the character of the blessings that are ours. Look with me again in verse 3. He says, *“who has blessed us in Christ,”* first of all, *“with every spiritual blessing.”* Every spiritual blessing.

You and I have been given, in Christ, every spiritual blessing. Not just some of them, all of them. Every single one. But they're spiritual blessings, and that speaks of the kind of a covenant that you and I are in through Jesus, alright? Ours is a spiritual covenant. We've talked about this in the past.

When we go through the Old Testament on Wednesday night, we always bring out the fact that Israel entered into a physical covenant with God. The Mosaic covenant was a physical covenant. God basically said, I am your God, you are my people, keep my law, and I will give you the land. I will make you fruitful in the land. I will bless you against your enemies. No one will be able to withstand you. I will even keep you free from the diseases that were going on in Egypt. I will make you fruitful in your child raising, in your crops, on and on. It was all physically oriented, okay, under the Mosaic covenant. That's not the covenant we're under. We've made that point many times.

We are in the new covenant which is, as Paul outlines here, a spiritual covenant. Okay? He says that God has blessed you and I with every spiritual blessing. And this is all consistent with God's Word which foretold in the Old Testament that the covenant we are under would be very different from the new one. I'll remind you of this on the screen from Jeremiah chapter 31 and I've even highlighted part of the passage, the whole thing says,

Jeremiah 31:31-32 (NIV)

*"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. **It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers** when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt..."*

*"The time is coming," (note that the NIV says, "the days are coming") "declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant (right?) with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. **It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers** (note the NIV says, "ancestors") when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt..."*

There it is right there again. We've looked at this many times. *"It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers."* Why? That covenant was physical. Ours is spiritual. Okay? Very important that we see that. Here's why.

Over the course of, well, even my lifetime, there've been many occasions when the body of Christ has sought to bring physical elements into our covenant with God and make them part of the covenant and by, part of the covenant, I mean promises based on our covenant relationship with God through Jesus and what He did for us on the cross.

For example, physical healing. Let me just say something about physical healing. I believe that God heals people physically. We're told in the Book of James, if anyone is sick among you, let them call for the elders. The elders will anoint that person with oil, pray the prayer of faith over them and so forth. We see Paul going around, doing, well, obviously Jesus began it. The rest of the disciples, Peter, John, and then we cover the ministry of Paul. There was a lot of healing that went on as the Gospel went out.

We see that God heals. Here's the error. People have tried to make it part of the covenant. It's not in the covenant. It's not in our covenant. God never promised us. Now he did with Israel. But it was based on obedience with Israel. Okay? They had to obey God's law, which by the way they never did. But He said, if you obey my law, none of the diseases that came upon you in Egypt or that

came or that were in Egypt will come upon you. That was a promise God made to Israel, but it was a physical promise. We would expect a physical promise with a physical covenant, right?

God never made that promise to you and I. And Christians say, oh yeah, what about that passage, *“by his stripes, you are healed?”* People, we show our ignorance when we assume that the presence of the word, healed, always has a physical connotation. When you look at the places where that passage originates and is quoted in the Word, it is always talking about spiritual healing. And it's just, but we love to quote it. I, and honestly, I would love to believe it, but ours is a spiritual covenant.

And again, I'm not saying God doesn't heal, I believe He does. And if you have a situation for which you need a touch from the Lord on a physical level, then you need to pray and have other people pray over you and even be obedient, have people anoint you with oil and so forth, and trust the Lord. I'm not saying it doesn't happen.

All I'm saying is it's not part of our covenant. You can't make it part of the covenant. Nor can you make it part of the covenant that God is going to give you that new car you want or give you the raise that you want, or the house. Those are physical things, ours is not a physical covenant, right?

Paul says, bless the Lord who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing. The next thing that's important to see about this is where these spiritual blessings are. Notice he says, *“he's blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in heavenly places.”* Oh, they're in heavenly places, not earthly places. Again, that's in keeping with our spiritual covenant, right?

Doesn't mean God can't bless you. He can bless you and He does bless people, but our covenant with Him is one of spiritual blessings that are kept in heavenly places.

I want you to see on the screen how Peter talks about this. From 1 Peter chapter 1:3 and 4.

1 Peter 1:3-4 (NIV)

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, kept in heaven for you.”

“Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. In his great mercy, he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead (Check this out) and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade, kept in heaven for you.”

All right? Your inheritance is kept in heaven. And by the way, that's the best bank you'll ever trust in. It's kept in heaven. It's interesting, the physical covenant that Israel had, meant that their physical inheritance could be affected by things that could threaten their inheritance. To this day, to this day, Israel's inheritance in the land is overrun by the Gentiles. It's still being overrun by the Gentiles. It's not completely theirs. It's a lot more than it used to be but they still don't have it free and clear. They don't even have a temple up in Israel. There's an Islamic mosque in its place.

Physical blessings, physical inheritance, those things can be taken away, they can spoil, they can fade, but yours are kept in heaven. Paul goes on to enumerate the blessings, he says in verse four, *“even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him.”*

And this is another way that He wants you to correct how you see yourself. Because in Christ, He wants you to know that you were chosen before the foundation of the world. And He's going to have a whole lot more to say about this.

But this first blessing that He's talking about here. Well, I guess having our inheritance kept in heaven is a blessing. But this first thing that he refers to is about the fact that we've been chosen. We've been chosen by God before the creation of the world and that's something God wants you to know.

You are not an accident. You are not a bother. You were chosen by Him before you ever existed. He knew that you would be, and He chose you in Him. And that is why Paul goes on to say, *“in love, he predestined us for adoption 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’”* or *“in the one He loves,”* your Bible may say.

And here we have that word, predestined, and man has that word given us trouble in the body of Christ, hasn't it? I mean predestination. Whole Christian groups have been built on the idea of predestination, what it is and what it isn't, what it means and what it doesn't mean. But essentially what it means, you see, is that God exists outside of time. You understand that, right?

God created time. He is not bound by time. You and I are bound by time. God is not. And so, He knows all things He, waits for nothing. He didn't have to wait for you to be born, to know you, or to know your life and your eternal destiny. He didn't have to wait. Gee, I wonder how this one's going to turn out. God never wondered anything.

And so, when the Bible speaks of your salvation, from His vantage point, from His perspective, it says *“that God foreknew you and therefore he predestined you.”* Because He foreknew, knew ahead of time, ahead for you and me, not for Him, because He knew, He predestined, okay?

For so many people, I don't know, maybe even the majority of the people, the word predestined means fixed. In other words, for them, it means God knew something, and so He made it happen.

A lot of people, if you ask them, what is the definition of predestination, they would say, God foreknew, and so, that's the way it's going to happen. It's fixed. Can't change it. Right? And so, their conclusion is, God fixes our salvation before we're born. And, then they, which isn't horrible, because it's essentially but they take it a step further and they say God fixes the condition of lost people before they were born. Fixes. Remember fixes means it's set in place by God. And then they wrap it all up in the word sovereignty.

And for the record, I want you to know that I believe thoroughly in God's sovereignty, but I do not believe that predestination nullifies one of the greatest gifts that God has given to mankind. And that is a free will. It is what makes you different from your pet. Your dog or your cat or your gerbil or whatever you have at home. They operate on instinct. They don't reason things out and they don't make these determinations based on a free will. You do.

And the only reason you do is because God gave you that ability. He gave it. Predestination denies all that, in the definition of predestination that is carried by so many. And that's where I have a problem. I don't believe predestination means God fixed it. I believe it means that God foreknew and therefore you were predestined.

But again, if you're going to take the position that everything is fixed, in terms of your salvation or an unbeliever's lost condition, and particularly an unbeliever's lost condition, man alive, you've got a lot of Scripture to resolve that's not going to make any sense. I personally believe, let me show you one on the screen from 2 Peter 3:9. It says,

2 Peter 3:9 (ESV)

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

“The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”

You know what that passage says? It says, God is not willing that any should perish. In other words, it is not God's will that any perish. Do some people perish? Well, we know they do because Jesus said, *“Narrow is the road to life, and few find it. Broad is the path that leads to destruction, and many go that way.”*

Do some people perish? Sadly, yes. Is it because God wills them to perish? Obviously not according to this passage, because Peter makes it very clear, He is not willing that any should perish. It is not His Will. The problem with looking at predestination as everything is fixed is that you literally create this God who creates people, says about them, I don't want you to be lost, but then determines ahead of time that they're going to be, apart from their choice and they have no ability to make a determination in the matter.

They're just lost. They were conceived lost. You see, that's a problem. Scripturally, that's a problem. Let me show you another one. 1 John 2:2,

1 John 2:2 (NIV)

“He, Jesus, is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

“He, Jesus, is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for the sins of the whole world.”

This passage says Jesus made salvation available to everyone. It says, He died for the sins of the whole world. That makes no sense if God predestines people to be lost, apart from any free will choice of their own.

Jesus said, *“I have come into the world as a light that whoever believes in Me may have eternal life.”* He didn't say, I've come into the world as a light that whoever I figured out ahead of time and predestined and fixed it for them. He

didn't say that. He said, *"I've come into the world to be a light so that whoever believes need not remain in darkness but can have the light of life."* Whoever.

The reason He can say, *"whoever"* is because He died for *"whoever."* Not just for our sins, but the sins of the whole world, okay? The whole predestination term is an, after, term. What I mean by that is, Paul's writing this letter to believers.

When you talk to believers, when you talk to people who are already saved, you talk about their salvation in the language of after. And what I mean by that is, we look at, you look at your salvation and you say, God knew me from the foundations of the earth. He knew, and I was predestined.

But when you're talking to somebody before they know Jesus, when you're out witnessing to people, you don't use after language, you use before language. And the before language is, whosoever will believe will be saved. Whosoever will put their faith in Jesus will be saved. That's before language, you see. Okay?

It's the appeal that we make to people. We don't go around saying, have you been predestined for salvation? Because if you have, I just wanted you to know, you're going to be coming to the Lord. I don't know when, but one of these days, it's going to happen. It has to happen.

Hang in there bud, unless of course you're not predestined for salvation, which of course then means you're predestined for damnation. Sorry, didn't mean to bring up a sore point. Anyway, it's all fixed. Have a good day. Oh, that would be effective evangelism. Listen how Paul words his appeal, 2 Corinthians 5:20,

2 Corinthians 5:20 (ESV)

"Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."

"Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ. God making his appeal through us." (What do we do?) *"We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God."* (That's before language. Get it? That's before language. After language is), *"God knew you from the foundations of the earth."* (Before language is), *"we implore you, be reconciled to God,"*

Come to Him. Jesus has made a way, right? Paul goes on speaking of our spiritual blessings.

Verse 7, in your Bible. *“In Him we have redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace, ⁸which He lavished upon us in all wisdom and insight.”*

There's a word in there I love because it tells me that God didn't just forgive us. It says, He lavished forgiveness on us. Isn't that a good word? Lavished. It's even fun to say. Lavished. There's just a few words that are fun to say. That's one of them.

You and I have had forgiveness lavished. Do you know why that's important to understand or to see that word? Because he's correcting things that the enemy wants to get out of whack. People doubt all the time whether or not they're forgiven, and I know that because I talk to people and I ask them, Do you believe that you're forgiven? Well, I've done some pretty rotten stuff. That's the voice of the enemy.

You know what the voice of God is? You know how He wants you to see your position now in Christ through a biblical view. And that biblical view is God has lavished forgiveness on you with all wisdom and insight. His wisdom and insight. It's been lavished, given in a lavish, super abundant sort of a way, right? Notice how He did it.

It goes on, ⁷*“...through His blood.”* And of course whenever we speak of the blood of Jesus, you guys know, the blood means life. Remember the Bible tells us in the Old Testament, that's why the Jews were forbidden from eating blood. They had to bleed an animal.

In fact, God said if you eat blood, meat with blood still in it, you're banished from your people. Why? What was he trying to communicate to the Jews way back then? The importance of the blood. Why? Because the blood is what we offer for sacrifice. Why? Because it's a picture of life. You drain somebody's blood, they're going to die.

The life of an animal, the life of a human, is in the blood. Right? When the Bible says, you have been given forgiveness, it's been lavished on you through his blood, it means through His life. Through the life that He gave on your behalf. It always points to a life given. The blood. Okay? One more blessing. We're not going to get through all these. We'll have to pick it up.

Verse 9, *“making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”*

This is the next blessing that you have. It's a spiritual blessing. And it's yours and mine in Jesus. And basically, what he says is, He's made known to you and I the mystery of His Will.

Now, Paul doesn't really explain here why that is necessarily a blessing. He understood it. Jesus actually is the one who explained it. Do you understand that when somebody takes you into their confidence and they tell you things that they wouldn't tell somebody else, that says something about your relationship. Let me show you how Jesus put it in John 15 verse 15.

John 15:15 (ESV)

“No longer do I call you servants. A servant doesn't know what his master is doing. But I've called you friends. For all that I've heard from my father, I have made known to you.”

“No longer do I call you servants. (why?) A servant doesn't know what his master is doing. (He says) but I've called you friends. For all that I've heard from my father, I have made known to you.”

What does it say about our relationship with God, that He has made known to us the mystery of His will? Speaks of the intimacy of relationship. We are not just servants, we are friends. Friends of God, you guys. That's something that we can, it comes out of our mouth, but we don't have a clue, really the depth of what it means. You are a friend of God.

Have you ever been reading through the Old Testament, like in Deuteronomy and stuff, and it'll talk probably more maybe in Exodus or something like that, but it'll talk about how Moses spoke with God face to face. And of course, it doesn't mean a face to, full glory face to face. It means that He spoke to Moses in an open, unhindered sort of a way, didn't go through prophets, or dreams, or visions. He just spoke to Moses as a friend, talks to a friend.

And I've often read those passages and thought, wow, He didn't do that during that season, He didn't do that to anybody else. Joshua, do you remember what the Bible says? After Moses would leave the presence of the Lord, when He got done talking, Joshua would just hang out, just to be close to the trailing glory of God's presence. That's where he was at that time. But Moses? Different. He spoke to the Lord face to face. Like a man speaks to his friend.

And I've often read that when I'm going through Exodus and so forth. I thought, wow, what a privileged position. People, that is your privileged position. You speak right to the Father, in the name of Jesus, you talk directly to Him and not

only do you talk directly to Him, He speaks directly to you and He's telling you things that show the closeness of your relationship. He has made known to you, mysteries that are not known by others.

I put a quote on my Pastor Paul page on Facebook by Damien Kyle. I love this quote. And I'm paraphrasing here, but he said, "the simplest Christian with a Bible knows more about life and eternity and where things came from than the smartest people on the earth put together. The simplest Christian with a Bible knows more than the smartest, wisest, most brilliant people of the earth put together." Why? Because that person with the Bible has been given mysteries.

God has shared mysteries with you and I, and it's a powerful blessing. Part of the mystery we'll end here in verse 10, *"as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth."*

And this is part of the mystery that you and I have been revealed. And that is, Ken, go ahead and come on up if you would. The mystery here is something that you and I know about the upcoming Millennial Kingdom. The Millennial Kingdom is a 1,000-year period that's going to be upon the earth after the Tribulation Period and during that time, He will unite all things in Him, things in Heaven and on Earth. See, the world doesn't know those things.

You and I have been given the insights into those mysteries, right, because of our special relationship to Him. And that is part of the incredible spiritual blessing that we have in Jesus Christ. Well, it's obviously challenging here to stop anywhere in the middle of a run on sentence. Even though there's a period at the end of verse 10, I appreciate the fact they put that there so we can stop here this morning. It just goes on and we will go on as well and talk more about these things next time here in our study of Ephesians. But let's go ahead and stand.

I just want to remind you to be looking for this as we go through this study in Ephesians, okay? This is all about who you are in Jesus. If you've wondered who you are in Christ and maybe the enemy's even throwing out all kinds of doubt your way and so forth. That's what the study is largely going to be about.

And I pray that as we go through this study and even complete this study, Lord willing, that we will walk away built up in who we are and that we'll hang on to that. Hang on to it. Who you are in Jesus, don't let go. Don't let the enemy cheat you out of that reality, who you are in Christ.