

Series: “Ephesians: Discovering Our Riches in Christ”

“Am I Rich and Just Don’t Know It?”

Ephesians 1:3-6

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SLIDE – Hetty Green

Hetty Green is listed in The Guinness Book of World Records as “America’s Greatest Miser”, yet when she died in 1916 she left an estate valued at between 100-200 million dollars. Today the value would be almost 3 billion dollars! History tells us that Hetty Green...

- Ate cold oatmeal because she didn’t want to spend the money to heat it.
- She wore one old black dress and undergarments that she changed only after they had been worn out.
- Her son Ned had to suffer a leg amputation, because she delayed so long in looking for a free clinic that his case became incurable.

Eccentric? Certainly! Crazy? Perhaps - although no one could prove it!

- It is said that she hastened on her own death by bringing on a stroke while arguing about the value of drinking skimmed milk!

Why do I start my sermon off today sharing with you a story about Hetty Green? Because we are going to find out today that each and every one of us as Christians are “rich beyond measure” with “Spiritual Riches,” what our verses today are going to call...

SLIDE – “Spiritual Blessings”

...yet I’m afraid most of us are living as misers in regards to our spiritual riches!

Hetty Green reminds me of another family that many of us are familiar with. This family had a sit-com from 1962-1971. This family struck oil on their farm and became immediately rich. They were encouraged to move to Beverly Hills, which they did - but all the while they lived in Beverly Hills they just couldn’t get the “country” out of them! Yes, you remember them don’t you?

SLIDE – Beverly Hillbillies

Well, the Beverly Hillbillies remind us too...in a spiritual sense...that when we come to Christ as our Savior we “strike oil” as it is...in our spiritual life! We become “rich - spiritually”. Yet, so many believers continue to live in the same clothes and by the same thoughts as before we came to Christ. We are going to see today that when we come to Christ as our Savior God gives us riches - by way of what we are going to see as...

SLIDE – “Spiritual Blessings”

...the question we need to ask ourselves is, “Are we going to use them or simply have them and live like misers?”

SLIDE –Pg. 1156 AM I Rich and Just Don’t Know It?

Take your Bibles, please and open them to the New Testament book of Ephesians 1. If you didn’t bring your Bible with you today I would encourage you to reach forward and grab that burgundy colored Bible and turn to page 1156. (1st Service – Video Café – Raise hands for a Bible and someone will come by and hand you one! Keep it up!)

As you are turning there in your Bible I want to show you quickly...

Who, What and When of These Spiritual Blessings

...and by that I simply want us to see what is involved in receiving these Spiritual Blessings. So here is a chart to help us see it better.

SLIDE –

Verses	Who?	What?	When?
vv. 3-6	The Father	Initiated	Eternity Past
vv. 7-12	The Son	Implemented	Present
vv. 12-14	The Spirit	Empowers	Present/Future

So we see that we have the entire Trinity (Father; Son; Holy Spirit) giving us spiritual blessings. And what we are going to focus on today is the blessings the Father initiated for us in eternity past! READ vv. 3-6

SLIDE – Two Questions Worth Asking

1. How many blessings do we get from the Father?

SLIDE –

Answer: All of them!

You and I lack no spiritual blessing that we need! Here is a verse in II Peter that has become one of my favorites over the years...

SLIDE – II Peter 1:3

His divine power has given us everything we need to cope with life and to become a godly person through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.

Do you see that? “*Everything we need!*” You and I lack nothing we need to make it through life! If you are a Christian here today God has supplied you; you have it within you; the Spirit of God has given you what you need from a spiritual basis to make it through every situation you face.

Do you believe that? Do you believe that? You see, the fact of the matter is God HAS given us what we need to cope with life and to become a godly person and to live like a godly person! That is fact! What I find is that many - many Christians just don't believe it.

Can I have you do something just practical with me today? Would you read this verse with me out loud and then after you read the verse just say, “I believe that!” If you really do believe that it is! READY?

SLIDE – I Believe that! (one more time!)

APPL:

I can remember the first time I caught this truth! I was sitting in my Greek class in seminary studying the book of Ephesians (7 years after I was saved) and we had just gone through this verse in the Greek! So we had to tear apart every word and put it all back together again. As I sat there and meditated on this verse the Spirit of God just pierced it to my heart! It was like...WOW! A light came on! “*He has blessed me with EVERY Spiritual blessing!*” And I can recall tears coming to my eyes. Tears of joy and wonder and peace!

You do know what that means, right? That He has blessed us with EVERY spiritual blessing means...

- No more excuses!
- When I blow it - it's not because...
 - ‘I'm not strong enough’!
 - ‘He hasn't given me what I need!’
 - ‘That's good for them but I can't do it!’

No, I have been given what I need spiritually to cope with life and live like a godly person!

So from the day we get saved all we are doing is discovering or learning about these blessings. I've got them...I need to discover!

And how do we do that? Well that is the second part of this verse.

READ

Studying God's word; knowledge of Him (Jesus Christ)!

ILL -

If I'm are given access to Fort Knox Depository where 5,000 tons of gold is stored and told to help myself, and I come out with one cent ...whose fault is it that I'm still poor? Yah, you got it. Mine!

When we need to we should RUN to this section of Ephesians anytime we get discouraged with life and fill up!

ILL -

An old Navajo Indian who had become rich because oil had been found on his property took all the money and put it in a bank. Every once in a while the Indian would show up at the bank and say to the banker, “*Grass all gone, sheep all sick, water holes all dry.*” The banker wouldn't say a word -- he knew what needed to be done. He'd bring the old man inside and seat him in the vault. Then he'd bring out several bags of silver dollars and say, “These are yours.” The old man would spend about an hour in there looking at his money, stacking up the dollars and counting them. Then he'd come out and say, “*Grass all green, sheep all well, water holes all full.*” He was simply reviewing his resource, that's all. That is where encouragement is found -- when we look at the resources which are ours, the riches, the facts which under gird our faith we can be encouraged and go on!

Another question worth asking is...

SLIDE – Two Questions Worth Asking

2. What are some of these blessing?

There are 3 blessings listed here that come from the Father...one is listed in verse 4; one listed in verse 5; and one listed in verse 6 (and as we mentioned previously there are 9 listed through v. 14). There are actually 36 different blessings listed in the Scriptures, but we won't have time to go through each of them. The first blessing we get from the Father is...

SLIDE –

- He Chose Us
READ v. 4

Yes, for those of you who have been a Christian for many years and have heard of the word and the debates that go along with the word...this is the doctrine/theology/teaching of ELECTION!

For those of you that are newer in Christ and have not heard of the doctrine/theology/teaching of 'election' (as well as those of you who have) let me remind you that we won't solve age old questions on this teaching here today. Nor will those age old questions ever be solved this side of heaven.

And I don't claim that I will be able to! But what I want to do is to be able to understand this blessing so we can enjoy it and take comfort in it when we need to. So let's see what we can do to understand what is being said...

SLIDE – Definition:

Election is an act of God before creation in which He chooses some people to be saved, not on account of any foreseen merit in them, but only because of His sovereign good pleasure.

He is saying that before God the Father even created the world that you and I live on He 'chose' us or 'selected' us to become saved. It is not just that He looked down through the corridor of time and 'knew' that we would one day receive Him as our Savior. It is much stronger than that! Before God created the world He actually determined that I would one day receive Him as my Savior! Now I certainly didn't know that about myself and you didn't know that about yourself, but God had it all planned from before the world was created.

Now the questions this raises are questions like...

- I thought I chose to become a Christian, didn't I?
- How can I choose if God has made that decision before creation?
- How can I have a 'free-will' if God is choosing?
- Does that mean that some people 'cannot' become Christians because God has not chosen them?

And so goes those many questions that boggle our minds in regards to election and free will of man. The reality is the Bible teaches BOTH!

SLIDE –

Am I 'elect' or do I have 'free will'? YES!

God selected - before creation - WHO would be saved AND ... I make a choice of whether I want to become a Christian. It is something we will never fully understand until we get to heaven...but that is okay and has to be okay. Just know...before creation God chose for me to receive Jesus Christ as Savior and when the time came and I was at the age He selected me to be saved...I accepted Him!

Why is this so good to know? Why is this a blessing? To remind us that if God has had my salvation planned from before creation; if He has been thinking of me and desiring for me to be a Christian for that long; then...

SLIDE – Result:

- I can LIVE like He wants me to LIVE today!

That is the whole motivation factor behind knowing that I have been selected by God to be His! My goodness, what a privilege! What a blessing! To know that God has had me on His mind...there is nothing I cannot do for Him!

- I can defeat temptation for Him
- I can treat other Christians with love for Him
- I can talk with kindness to my spouse and kids
- I can endure suffering for Him
- I can talk of Him in front of others

You see, when we think about the privilege of God having us on His mind from before creation it motivates us to LIVE like He wants us to LIVE today!

And right here it's as if God reads our minds as a human being, knowing that we are going to come back with excuses like...

...but I'm not good enough!

...but I'm so bad!

...that God is one step ahead of us and says, "Wait a minute. You are holy and blameless in my sight!" (v. 4)

And please don't go over those two qualities too fast! God is letting us know that when we received Him as our Savior "in His sight" He looks at us as...

...holy - set apart/saints/

...blameless - no fault/spotless of sin

Our problem is we look at ourselves through OUR eyes and see “sinner” and “messed up”! And we are. But God looks at us through JESUS CHRIST’S eyes and sees forgiven; saint; no fault!

APPL: Do you need to remember our verse in II Peter 1:3

SLIDE – II Peter 1:3

His divine power has given us everything we need to cope with life and to become a godly person through our knowledge of Him who called us by His own glory and goodness.

You see, it is by knowing Jesus Christ better and better that we can cope with life better and become a more godly person in our actions.

And when I first learned this truth I did two things:

I relaxed in my Christian life - I knew I could live it!

I studied the Scriptures - I wanted to know how to live it!

Can I ask you a question? Are you too uptight in your Christian life? Too worried about living it? Or possibly ‘not’ living it because you think it is too hard? Relax! Satan has you duped!

THE VERSE - you can do it! Just learn how and have fun living it!

Okay...the 2nd blessing we receive is...

SLIDE –

- He Adopted Us

READ v. 5

And here we meet up with that sooooo misunderstood word:

SLIDE – Predestination -

Allow me to share four couple truths with you that have to do with predestination; let some of you who learned something completely different about this word chew on it for awhile; and then move on to adoption.

SLIDE –

1. Has to do with believers not unbelievers
2. Has to do with after salvation not before salvation
3. Has to do with events/circumstances not salvation
4. Has to do with conforming not election

SLIDE – In other words...

Election starts before the creation of the world and ends the day I get saved!

Predestination starts the day I get saved and ends the day I get glorified!

Too many times we have been taught that these are just different words for the event. No, they are different events in our lives that occur at different timing.

Let me share a verse with you that most of you probably know (many even know it by memory); but few understand it in light of this truth...

SLIDE – Romans 8:28-29

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers.

(Talk through this verse...)

Now the word Predestine means - to determine beforehand.

It means that God determines beforehand the circumstances/events/ things that occur so you and I will be more conformed into His character!

Now in our verse (5) we are told that God “*predestined*” - determined beforehand this event - “*that I should be adopted as His son through Jesus Christ.*”

What is adoption?

SLIDE – Definition:

The act of God by which He gives each of His ‘born ones’ an adult standing in His family!

Notice: it is not the way to get into God’s family! We get into God’s family by WHAT? Regeneration - (being born again). Not by adoption. Adoption is the way we enjoy God’s family!

This is where adoption differs from our modern day adoption! When we are adopted today there are many similarities with modern day adoption. Like -

- We take on a new family name
- We have a new address
- We have new standards to live by

But, the one that is unique is this one...when I am adopted into God’s family I - then and there - get all my adult privileges! (definition) (Scripture lists six of them: Walking; freedom; communication; assurance; inheritance now; AND suffering.

SLIDE – Result:

➤ I can LIVE like He wants me to LIVE today!

Because I have an adult standing and all the privileges of a spiritual adult, I can live that way. I don't have to spend years and years before I can live for and like Christ! Oh, I do grow in Christ. But it doesn't have to take years and years. When the Apostle Paul wrote the letter to the Thessalonians scripture tells us he had only gotten to spend 3 months with them. But by that time we are also told he taught them about faith, love, hope, election, assurance of salvation, the Holy Spirit, how to handle suffering, the end times, and more! So much so that by the end of 3 months he commended them as wonderful examples to all that were watching them!

And our encouragement with knowing that we are adopted is that we too can live like He wants me to live TODAY!

Okay...the 3rd blessing we receive from the Father is...

SLIDE –

- He Graced Us
READ v. 6

SLIDE – Definition:

Unmerited favor!

vv. 7-8

“Lavish with favor!”

APPL:

I think this is written to those of you with a low self-esteem! Those of you who don't think you are much! Those of you who walk around with a 'poor me' attitude! You don't like the way you look or the fact that you don't have more money or that you don't seem to get the breaks someone else has. LISTEN...to know that God “lavishes His favor” on you can transform how you walk about this earth for the rest of your life!

Do you know where it is in Scripture that is the ONLY other time this exact word is used? It is in Luke 1:28. In that verse Gabriel is talking with Mary sharing with her that she will give birth to the Christ. And this is what he said to her...

SLIDE –

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Do you think God thought Mary was someone special? You bet!
Do you think God thinks YOU are someone special? You bet!

I tell you what! God thinks you are so special He had you on His mind from before creation! Wow!

SLIDE – Result:

➤ I can LIVE like He wants me to LIVE today!

Well, we asked and answered a couple of powerful question today. How is it that we are supposed to respond to these truths?

SLIDE – One Response Worth Doing

Look with me at v.3 (READ)

And then v. 6 (READ)

What response are we supposed to have when we see that...

- He chose us
- He adopted us
- And He graced us?

We are supposed to PRAISE Him!

So let's do that today as we close...and to help us I have put this reminder on the screen...

SLIDE –

Praise the LORD, O my soul;
all my inmost being, praise His holy name.
Praise the LORD, O my soul;
and forget not all His benefits!

Pray...

Chosen - you haven't yet responded?

Adopted - You have everything you need...

Graced - Give up your self-image complex!

Pray!

SLIDE – Blessings

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