

# Blessed from the Beginning

## Ephesians 1:3-14

Big Idea: Before we decide what we are going to *do* in a new year, Paul reminds us who we already *are* in Christ, and how that identity shapes our calling together.

## Introduction: Starting in the Right Place

- A new year often puts us in **evaluation mode**:
  - What needs to change?
  - What do I need to fix?
  - What do I want this year to look like?
- Those are not bad questions, but they are not where Paul starts.
- Ephesians 1:3-14 is one long, unbroken sentence of **praise**.
- Before instruction, Paul offers **worship**.
- Before calling, Paul reminds us of **identity**.

### Key Insight:

Christian life begins not with effort, but with remembrance: remembering what God has already done.

## 1. Blessing Before Pressure

(Ephesians 1:3)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ...”

### Key Observations

- The word *blessed* moves in two directions:
  - **Praise** from us to God
  - **Gift** from God to us
- Christianity begins not with what we offer God, but with what God has already given.
- “Every spiritual blessing” means:
  - Not partial
  - Not conditional

- Not delayed

## “Heavenly Places”

- Not distant or abstract
- Refers to **God’s realm of authority and purpose**
- What is already true in God’s realm is now shaping our lives

### Key Truth:

We are not trying to earn God’s blessing, we are learning how to live inside it.

## 2. Chosen *in Christ*

*(Ephesians 1:4)*

“He chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world...”

### Why “in Christ” Matters

- Paul repeats this phrase again and again for a reason
- “In Christ” is **participation language**, not just a label
- Our lives are now bound up with Jesus’ life

### What This Means

- Christ is the Chosen One
- Those who belong to Christ share in his calling
- Election is not about status, but **formation**

“Holy and blameless before him in love”

### Key Truth:

Our identity is not something we manufacture, it is something we participate in.

## 3. Adoption Before Assignment

*(Ephesians 1:5)*

“He predestined us for adoption as sons and daughters...”

### Adoption in Paul’s World

- Legal, permanent, secure
- A new name and a new identity
- Not probationary or temporary

## The Order Matters

- Adoption comes **before** assignment
- Belonging comes **before** responsibility
- Calling flows from security, not anxiety

### Key Truth:

God does not give us tasks to earn belonging, God claims us and then sends us.

## Old Testament Echo: Chosen for the Sake of Others

### God's Pattern Throughout Scripture

- **Abraham:** Blessed to be a blessing
- **Israel:** Chosen to be a light to the nations
- Election always leads to vocation
- Vocation always points outward

### Fulfilled in Christ

- Jesus is the faithful Israelite
- Jesus is the true Son
- All who are *in Christ* share in that mission

### Key Truth:

God chooses not to hoard blessing, but to extend it through his people.

## 4. Grace at the Center of the Story

*(Ephesians 1:7-12)*

“In him we have redemption... according to the riches of his grace.”

### Grace Comes First

- Redemption and forgiveness precede purpose
- Grace is not an add-on, it is the engine

### God's “Plan”

- Not a personalized roadmap
- God's long-term purpose to unite all things in Christ
- God is healing and reclaiming creation

“For the praise of his glory”

**Key Truth:**

The Church exists to make visible what God is like.

## 5. Marked by the Spirit

*(Ephesians 1:13-14)*

### The Spirit as Seal

- Marks ownership and protection
- Confirms identity and belonging

### The Spirit as Guarantee

- Not everything is finished
- But the future is secure

### Communal Language

- Paul is describing a people, not just individuals
- A Spirit-shaped community sent together

**Key Truth:**

We are a people marked by God’s faithfulness in an uncertain world.

## Identity Becomes Visible: Ordination

- Everything Paul says is true of **all** who are in Christ
- Ordination names and affirms servant leadership already being lived out
- Deacons are **servants with a capital S**
  - Set apart for visible, tangible leadership through service

## Final Invitation

- Ordination does not create calling, it recognizes it
- This moment invites all of us to remember:
  - We are blessed from the beginning
  - Claimed before we are called
  - Sent together for the praise of God’s glory