

# (Ephesians) a True Theology Produces a True Doxology

by Jeff Noblit

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*The sermon emphasizes that true praise of God must be rooted in a correct understanding of His nature and works, as revealed in scripture.*

**Duration:** 1:05:15

**Scripture:** Psalm 95:1, Psalm 103:1, Psalm 150:6, Matthew 6:33, Ephesians 1:3, Colossians 3:16, 2 Peter 1:3

**Topics:** "Ephesians"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the incredible love and sacrifice of God the Father in sending His Son, Jesus Christ, to save the world. The preacher marvels at the concept of the incarnation, where God became flesh and dwelt among us. The sermon then focuses on the spiritual blessings that believers have received through Christ, with the goal of increasing praise, reverence, service, and obedience to God. The preacher emphasizes the importance of having true knowledge and understanding of God's salvation in order to offer genuine praise and worship.

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## Transcript

We come to a section where Paul is going to talk about praising God. So I want to dedicate this message and probably the next, who knows how many, as we go through verse 14 of chapter 1 to our choir and orchestra and our music program. And by the way, they're only the prompters, we're all the praisers.

Amen? But y'all are good prompters. We like it that way. I enjoy it.

It's a blessing to me. But I believe Paul's going to show us some things here that's going to take us even higher and more thorough, maybe understanding of what praise is and why we praise. And I want us to look at it there together.

And Ephesians chapter 1, verse 3. Blessed, and you could just say praise, be God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. So he's writing to the church and he says, bless or praise God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Do you rather have some of those peculiar little childhood memories that are not necessarily great happy times or a great tragedy.

It's just sort of a little, a little glimpse of a memory in your heart and mind. And it doesn't really mean anything. It just never goes away.

You'll be driving down the road and that little thought will come back of that little event. And maybe it comes up every four weeks or four months. It's just a little silly thing.

One of the things that just I've never forgotten was when I was a little boy, we moved into a new subdivision. And so for years, they were just building new houses out in those old hayfields and pastures there in Lawrence County, Tennessee. And I used to love to go to those construction sites where those men were building those houses.

And I just thought it was the neatest thing every now and then I could go get them some nails or they'd let me carry a board. And I just thought, man, I'm building houses. It's just great.

And one of the older guys had a little phrase out of an old country song. He'd just sing over and over like he'd be carrying a two by four. When he threw it down, he'd just sing out that line or he'd be nailing two boards together.

When he'd get through nailing, he just sing out that line. And here was that line. And I don't think this will defile anybody for me to share it with you.

But that line was Ruby, red lips and cold black hair. I say right now, some of you remember that song. I guarantee you do.

Evidently it was, I had, I've never heard the song. I listen, don't come and tell me the rest of it. I don't want to know it, but I'll just be driving down the road.

And I steer here, hear that old carpenter Ruby, red lips and cold black hair. Well, you know, I got to thinking about that and I bet, and I thought, you know, I never saw his wife, but I bet the odds are good. She don't have Ruby, red lips and cold black hair.

And I never saw a woman around the construction site with Ruby, red lips and cold black hair. But that song meant a whole lot to him. You know what he was doing? He was just expressing the feelings of his heart and just singing it out.

But you know, once a man has known a woman for any time, if he's going to praise her or honor her, he needs to do that according to knowledge. He needs to know what she's like and what she desires and what she enjoys according to knowledge. And if a man's 25 years of age and he wants to honor his mother and he buys her a gift, he's with that excuse.

If he buys her something meaningless or something, she doesn't need it all. He should honor her according to knowledge. That's what Paul is going to show us here in this text.

And as we proceed down through the chapter in coming weeks, Paul is going to tell us that God wants to be praised and adored and honored and glorified according to knowledge of who he truly is and what he truly has done. Now, listen to me, church. God rejects praise and God rejects honor and God rejects adoration that comes from our selfish feelings about what we think he is or what we'd like for him to be.

He wants to be honored and adored and praised and exalted according to who he says he is and what he says he is like. And that's exactly what Paul is coming to in this text. But just to reaffirm to you how

important this is and the reason I want to say this with passion and with thoroughness is this.

It seems that in modern Christendom, there's just a lot going on that says, if you feel it deeply, it's wonderful and good. That's not necessarily so. Is it true? Is it true? Listen to what God says about this.

Mark chapter seven, verses six and seven. And he answered and said to them, well, did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites as it is written, these people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. And in vain, they worship me teaching us doctrines, the commandments of men.

He says, you're singing about me. You're worshiping me, but it's in vain. Why? Because your doctrine's wrong.

Did you see what Jesus said? You're not teaching the true knowledge of who I am and what I'm like. You're just doing what feels good to you. And God says, that's not acceptable.

Jeremiah 51, verse 17. The Bible says all men are stupid and devoid of knowledge. Now that's talking about the natural man.

When you come to Jesus Christ, you come from a, a state, if you will, of being devoid of the true knowledge of God. And when you are saved and you're truly converted, you begin to learn the knowledge of God. Now listen, then you begin a process of maturation in the word whereby you can more fully and truly praise God and glorify God and honor for honor God as you grow in knowledge.

But now listen to me, church somehow, and I have been guilty here too. We have connected honoring God and pleasing God with just deep sentiment or feeling, not thorough knowledge and understanding. Are you hearing me now? I want to go ahead and throw this out and I'll probably tie this in many times.

Now we need both. We don't want just the light of truth without any heart, emotional passion, but you sure don't want heart, emotional passion without the light of truth in your mind. We need to go to the word of God and understand who he is, what he is like, what he has done and how he did it and praise him according to that knowledge.

Not just our deep feeling. Jeremiah three, uh, 15, then I will give you shepherds after my own heart who will feed you on knowledge and understanding. Notice what are these spiritual leaders, these shepherds going to do that are going to give you knowledge and understanding of who God really is and what he really has done.

And then I'm going to turn to Hosea. If you can get there quickly, you can turn there, but it took me a while. So I put a paper clip in my Bible there.

So just listen to this. If you want to Hosea chapter four, beginning in verse one, listen to what the prophet says here, listen to the word of the Lord. Oh, sons of Israel for the Lord has a case against the inhabitants of the land because there's no faithfulness or kindness or knowledge of God in the land.

Now, wait a minute. This was Israel. They had all kinds of knowledge of God.

Now here's what he's saying. He's saying not truly the knowledge of the true God and his true ways. You've sort of twisted and perverted God to meet your needs.

In other words, you've, you've sort of twisted and perverted the truth about God to become your little idol that you're comfortable with, but not according to the knowledge of truth. So what happened in the land verse two, they're swearing deception, murder, stealing, and adultery. They employ violence so that bloodshed follows bloodshed.

Notice what he's saying here. Now, listen to me when there's not true accurately, a true, accurate dividing of the word of God, preaching of God's doctrine and truth, sin begins to abound. Now here's what happens.

Sin begins to abound and we begin to enjoy sin more and more, but we want to stay religious. So we keep perverting doctrine and truth to match or make us comfortable in our sin. And pretty soon churches, Christian people, professing people of God can tolerate and allow all kinds of unholiness and still call it God's blessing or God's work or call themselves God's people.

Verse three, therefore the land mourns and everyone who lives in it languishes along with the beast of the field and the birds of the sky. Also the fish of the sea disappear. So here in the nation of Israel, they become so corrupt that they're even damaging the physical earth.

Verse four, yet no one finds fault and no one offers reproof. What he's saying here, there's no real prophet to preach the true knowledge of God and bring them to correction like they need it. You know why? They're probably having a big time and everybody's happy and most preachers want to be more popular than they want to be respected.

And that's what he's saying. They're not finding fault and offering any reproof. Verse five, so you will stumble by day and the prophet also will stumble with you by night and I will destroy your mother.

Verse six, my people are destroyed for lack of knowledge. Notice the four words there. You have rejected knowledge and I'll also reject you from being my priest.

Since you have forgotten the law of God, I will also forget your children. So what was the key factor there? They don't want to learn who God truly is. They don't want to use their minds.

They don't want to be disciplined. They're in their understanding. They don't want to hear the disciplines preaching of the word of God or have any discipline Bible study in their life.

They just want to have a good time. Well, God rejects that. Hosea chapter six, verse six, he continues, for I delight in loyalty rather than sacrifice.

Now listen, in the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings. Instead of in shallowness and just emotional based sentimentality going through your religious observations, God says, I don't want that. I want you in your heart and in your mind and understanding, knowing who I am and praising me because you're in awe and you're in wonder over who I truly am.

And that's understandable to us as human beings, is it not? Do we not want people really to know us and appreciate us for that instead of just appreciating us for what they feel like we ought to be? I think we're all prone to that a little bit. Sometimes perhaps husbands sort of view their wives in terms of who they'd like for them to be instead of who they are. I think sometimes wives want to view their husbands in terms of their selfish feelings of who they'd like for their husbands to be instead of who they are.

I think sometimes parents, we're prone to want to impose on our children what we feel like they ought to be instead of who maybe God meant for them to be and who they are. Well, God says the same thing. Don't come to me with your deep feelings about what you think about me.

I want you to come learning about who I am and honor me, glorify me, exalt in me for who I say I am. Can I say something to you church? That'll take a little work. That's going to take a little Bible study.

That's going to take a little discipline. That's going to take getting the mental brain in gear. This is not a thoughtless, empty, baseless, unintellectual religion we have.

God wants us to use our intellect. I want to continue on to continue showing how important this is to God as He reveals it from His word. Malachi chapter 2 verse 7, for the lips of the priest should preserve knowledge and men should seek instruction from his mouth for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

So what is the priest, the spiritual leader to do? Make sure you have the knowledge and the instruction of who God is, how He acts, what He's done. Romans chapter 10 verse 2, for I bear witness that they have a zeal for God. And here's a people that has a zeal for God, but not in accordance to knowledge.

You know what the great missing link in Christianity today is? Discernment. Discernment. Everybody that pops up and uses the name of Jesus, everybody that pops up and seems like big things are happening around them, everybody that pops on television and seems to have a great following or stirs people's feelings deeply would say, that's God.

Where's the discernment that says, now wait a minute, the word of God says this, this, this, this, and this about God and what this guy's doing contradicts this, this, and this. It's in the word of God, therefore I discern according to knowledge this isn't of God. Where's the discernment in our age? It's greatly missing.

They have a zeal, they're excited, they're passionate, but they don't have a true understanding in their hearts and minds about who God is and what He expects and what His work is like. Paul says in 2 Corinthians 10.5, we are destroying speculations. False teachers would come into the church and they would bring their speculative ideas about what it's like to be a Christian and serve God.

And Paul says, man, when I find that stuff, I destroy it. I don't mess with it. I expose it and I cut it to shreds.

Because we don't want the speculations of men in our churches, we want the truth of God in our churches. We destroy speculations and every lofty thing raised up against what? Against the knowledge, the knowledge of God. And we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

Can I exhort you again on this thing of being a disciplined disciple in your mind? Constantly, and listen to me again, church, because there's a great victory here. And I wish somebody had taught me this years ago. You must constantly discipline yourself to catch your thinking patterns, your conclusions, and your viewpoints.

Some of you have thinking patterns, conclusions, and viewpoints that you're sure are pleasing to God and they're not. And I'm not talking about dirty thoughts and lustful thoughts. I'm talking about thoughts about the way God acts or thoughts about what conversion is or thoughts about how a wife's supposed to conduct herself or how a husband's supposed to conduct.

I mean, all the thoughts of reality. We need to be disciplined to always take them to the word. And when the word of God says we're off track to reject those thoughts.

Matter of fact, talk to yourself. Say, I reject that thinking in my mind right now. It's not the word of God.

It's not. Listen, we're people according to truth. And we ought to catch non-truth when it floats through our hearts and minds.

Why? Because we don't want speculations and lofty thoughts about God and service to God in our minds. We want truth about God and service to God in our minds. And you know what'll happen? Are you listening to your pastor? You walk in that discipline to humble yourself and keep kicking out untrue thinking and putting in biblical true thinking.

You know what'll happen? You'll start becoming very discerning. You'll start picking up on stuff that you see on television, watch, or hear on the radio, or maybe see in fellowships. And you'll start discerning this is not pleasing to God.

This is not the true honoring of God. 2 Corinthians 11, verse 6, Paul says to the church at Corinth, but even if I am unskilled in speech, yet I'm not so in knowledge. Now here's Paul, the preacher, and from what we can glean from the New Testament, Paul's probably not a real dynamic orator.

He's probably not very impressive as a pulpiter, that is in the art of speaking or proclaiming. But Paul says this, I do know God and I do know His truth, and that's what's important. Now let me ask you a question.

In the average conservative evangelical church today, if you had one guy who could get in the pulpit and really swoon everybody, and really thrill and stir and excite everybody, but really his content wasn't all that deep. But then if you had another man and he didn't have great pulpit skills, but he knew God and knew God's truth, and if you listen carefully, you've got a lot of great truth. Which one do you think the average conservative evangelical church would call in today's Christendom? We are enamored with pulpiterism sometimes and not enamored with truth proclaiming at times.

Paul said, I may be unskilled in speech and my preaching skills, but I'm not so in knowledge. 2 Peter chapter 1, verse 3, seeing that His divine power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness through the true knowledge of Him who called us. Now, once again, I've been sharing with you about reading a lot of church history and reading a lot about our Baptist forefathers.

And I keep running across all this catechizing of church members and all this personal instruction in God as they just sort of drilled Bible truth into their children's minds. And you know, there's a part of me that sort of said, resisted that. And then I read all these verses.

I thought, man, our forefathers were on to something we need to move back toward. I'm not saying we need to be just like them, but the principle of grounding our establishing in our hearts and minds, the true doctrines of the word of God is very important. Now, listen, listen, listen, listen.

Not very important first and foremost for our well-being, but very important that we might fulfill the ultimate purpose for which we exist. And that is that we might properly bring praise and glory to our God because He wants to be honored and praised according to true knowledge, not just deep sentiment. And far too often, I, we, the church today is too engrossed with deep sentiment, not deep truth.

Second Peter 3:18, but grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ to him, be glory both now and to the day of eternity. Amen. So Paul here in our chief text, again, Ephesians chapter one, he begins to get into more of the body of the doctrine he's going to lay out for us.

And he begins by saying, praise be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Now, what he's going to do in these first 14 verses is give us knowledge. Now listen to me.

Knowledge of the awesome, unbelievable, unfathomable truths of our salvation. And he's going to lay all that out so that as we collect those truths in our minds, we can, with knowledge and understanding, praise him more fully for all that he's done. That's going to be exciting.

Now, I'm not saying just praise him during the song service, by the way, that's one of the ways we praise him is when we're together, but I'm talking about seven days a week, 24 hours a day. When we are aware, we think of God praising him for the great truths of his salvation toward us. So he's going to give us some tremendous knowledge concerning salvation, concerning God's saving acts toward us.

And he's giving us those acts and he tells us repeatedly why. And he says it three times in the body of verses 1 through 14. That is to the end of the praise and glory and honor of God.

Now, listen to me, listen to me. That's Paul's point. And furthermore, and better, that's God's point with Ephesians chapter 1. I want to be praised and I want you to praise me according to knowledge.

So why don't we just dedicate our hearts right here now and say in our hearts to God, God, I dedicate myself to have a greater knowledge of you and all that you've done to save me so that I can praise you more fully according to knowledge. Not what I feel, not what stirs me, but what is true about what you've done and how you've done it. Now, I've entitled the message, a true theology produces a true doxology.

No, I'm not trying to use big words or impress you in any way. I want you to grasp what I'm saying though. A true theology leads to a true doxology.

What does the word theology mean? It comes from two words, theos, God, and logos or logia, which means speech or word. So it's the word about God, speech about God. And it's come to mean what we believe about God.

So if we believe the truth and have true knowledge about God, who he is, what he's done, then that's going to lead to the second thing, which is doxology. Now, you know what the doxology is, don't you? Maybe you grew up in a church like I did, and we sang it every Sunday when I was a little boy at the end of the service. Well, that's not really what doxology is.

It's come to have that name on that little old praise God from whom all blessings flow. Remember that? Praise him, all creatures here below. Praise him above you, heavenly hosts.

Praise father, son, and holy ghost. That's a great song, but that's not just what I mean by doxology. Doxology just comes from two words.

One word is dox, which just means praise and logia, which means speech of the word. It just means words of praise, praising God. So what am I saying? Here's what I'm saying.

I'm saying that Paul is saying, and God is saying, get a true theology, a true knowledge of who God is and what he's doing. That will compel you to explode, if you will, overflow in a proper doxology or praise of

God. And God wants us to be a praising people.

But you know, you can't praise him if you don't know who he really is. And you, now listen, you can't praise him as you ought if you don't understand what he's truly done for you. What did the old Testament prophet say? My people perish for lack of knowledge.

So Paul's going to give us these verses, verses one, actually verse three through 14 of this first chapter. And it's going to be one flowing symphony. Are you hearing what I'm saying? It's going to be one flowing symphony of theology and doxology, theology, doxology, theology, doxology.

Here's the way God is. Here's what God has done. Hallelujah.

Isn't he wonderful. But now listen to me, Satan is a counterfeiter. He's a liar.

He's a twister. Here's what Satan wants you to do. Satan wants you to say, don't, don't think about doctrine.

Don't think about theology. That's dry. That's dull.

That's boring. That's entertaining. That's not stirring.

That's not blessing you. Don't think about teaching or instruction or reproofs or pronouncements of doctrinal truth. Just sort of kick that out and just talk about Jesus and feel good about it.

God says, I reject that. I want you to have a true knowledge of who I am. Let that stir your emotions deeply and then praise me out of all of that.

So your intellect's involved, your emotions are involved, the will's involved in extending the praise and the glory and the honor that God deserves. The two major points I want us to see from verse three. And the first one is this.

Number one, we praise God, the father, because we know his son. Now that's all that's right there in verse three, but a casual reading would have easily missed it. Notice what he says.

He doesn't say praise be to God, the father, does he? No. He says, praise be to God, the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. You see, if he just lifted it, praise be to God, the father, we wouldn't have the knowledge to really know how to praise God.

But it is through his son, Jesus Christ, that we know much about the father. And as we learn much about our father, by knowing the son, we can't help but praise the father for sending his son and for having a son like that. So as Christians, we begin that exciting, thrilling experience of knowing God's son and therefore knowing God, the father.

And when you know the son and you increasingly know him better, you can't help but praise. You see, God sent his son that we might know more about him. When a ruler wants to get better acquainted with another kingdom's ruler, he would often send an ambassador.

And if this person was a real important and he really wanted that other ruler to know what he was like and what his feelings and desires were, he would send a high-ranking official. But if that ruler really wanted to communicate to that new ruler who he was and what his policies were, he might send his own son to

represent him. And that's what God the father has done.

He has sent his own son. You see, you can often tell much about a father by observing his son. Did you know that? Often, folks can tell something about us by observing our children.

Now, some of us as parents at this point would like to plead for a little mercy and a little understanding. And may I suffice it to say, this isn't always true. Sometimes it seems parents do everything they know to do, they're not perfect, and a child just rebels.

And I've seen far, far more times it seems like when I've had, especially during my youth pastor days, when I had young people who grew up in horrible home situations that just honored God and lived for God. So it's not always true, but it's often true. You know, I've noticed through the years, and it certainly happened at my house, a family will have their firstborn child.

And it just seems like God's usually gracious with the first one. They come home and it seems like more than likely the first one sleeps most nights. More than likely the first one is sort of compliant and a little bit calm and just overall pretty easy to deal with.

And you know what we do? We swell with pride and say, man, I am a wonderful Christian parent. Look at this child. And then God gives you another child.

And I mean, the second one, as soon as he or she pops out of the womb, they climb up the IV pole in the delivery room and swing from the tubing until you can grab the little critter and get him under control. And then you think, oh dear Lord, what has happened? I failed completely as a parent. So there are exceptions to that rule.

However, it is true that as a general sense, if you get to know a son, you can know something about the father. Well, God sent his son because his son, listen, is a perfect expression of himself. A perfect expression.

Jesus isn't just a good prophet. He isn't just a good teacher. Jesus was not some new moral leader who was showing man how to pull himself up by his own bootstraps and being a good example for mankind to follow.

He was infinitely more than that. As a matter of fact, C.S. Lewis is right. He couldn't just be a good teacher because he went around claiming to be God.

And if you're just a good teacher and you claim to be God, you're crazy. Lewis said he was either a lunatic going around saying he was God, or he was just an out-and-out liar, or he was the Lord that he said he was. He's the perfect expression of God.

Colossians 1.15 says, he is the image of the invisible God. God put himself in human form when his son put on human flesh and dwelt among us. And he had the outshining of very God when you see the Lord Jesus Christ.

So if you just said, um, uh, he's, he's, if you just said, let's give praise to the father, you wouldn't have a good knowledge of who the father is. But when we know the son, we are stirred in our understanding of how wonderful and glorious and praiseworthy the father really is. You know, that's very important because all of us had imperfect fathers.

So when you just say, the Bible says, praise the father, immediately we go to our father. And some of us had maybe even the evil fathers. But when you, he says, praise be to the father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Now that tells us something. And that helps us to praise him properly, to know him, to praise him. This is why we should praise him is because he is the father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let me give you three sub points here under this that ought to evoke praise in our hearts to God, the father. First of all, he sent his son. John 3.16, for God so loved the world that he gave, he gave him to us and he gave him on the cross.

His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And sometimes I think we need to take the simplest of truths, the incarnation, God becoming flesh, God putting on human clothing and dwelling among us is the most marvelous and wonderful thing one could ever imagine. I call it a condescension beyond comprehension.

How could God leave the glories of heaven and come to this sinful side? How could God lead the holiness of his heavenly king to become to this unholy earth? How could God lead the sinlessness of heaven to come to this sinful earth? The perfections of heaven to come to the wretchedness and evils of this world. And when we think on that, we just want to say, praise the father that would do that for us. He sent his son.

Secondly, I'd like to say, and looking at this, we saw his son and in every way he is incomparable. We saw his son. Now you and I didn't actually physically see him, but our forefathers in the faith, the apostles and many others saw him literally, actually, and physically.

And as they saw him, they saw him as incomparable. None other was like Jesus in any way. John, 1 John 1.1, John was talking about the actual fact that they literally physically knew Christ.

He said it this way, what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, we saw him. What we looked at and we touched with our hands concerning the word of life. We heard him.

We saw him. We looked at him. We touched him.

His son has come to us and he's marvelous beyond compare. I just listed four words here about Jesus as he was observed on this earth. You could probably list a hundred or any number of words to describe the wonder and the glory of the son of God.

But the first one I list is sinless. That's a marvelous thing by itself, sinless. On one occasion in John 8, 46, Jesus was facing his critics and he said, now, which one of you convicts me of sin? Can any one of you, he says, actually prove that I've sinned in any way? And you know what? They were silent before him.

He was sinless. God sent his sinless son. Secondly, I'd like to mention the word compassionate.

He's compassionate. He showed compassion to all and he particularly showed compassion to the most needy of all. That tells us something about him.

He is one who is compassionate and caring and loving. Remember the lepers that no one would have anything to do with. And that day, if you're a leper and you walk down the street, you're required by law to cry out, unclean, unclean.

And people would literally walk around you and you'd have to go to the other side of the street because no one wanted to be around you. But Jesus welcomed the lepers and he healed them. Remember that poor woman with the issue of blood? I think it was 12 years she had been so sick.

And in desperation, she fought through the crowd and touched the tassel of his garment, the text says. And instantly she was healed. She was scared to death when Jesus realized that power went out from him.

And he comforted her and consoled her and showed love and compassion to her. Lord Jesus is compassionate. Remember old blind Bartimaeus.

And that day there were a lot of eye ailments. Historians tell us a significant percentage of the population was blind. And these were literally the outcasts of society.

Bartimaeus sits by the side of the road and probably the only thing he has in his whole possession is the outer cloak that's over him. And as Jesus walks by, he cries out, Jesus, son of David, have mercy on me. And Jesus heals blind Bartimaeus.

Somebody, everyone else would have ignored and just walked around. When we see the son, we know something of the father and we praise him for that. A third word that I picked out is the word true.

He's true through and through. It's no feign obedience in him, no hypocrisy in him. He was the genuine deal.

Matter of fact, as the Pharisees, the religious leaders came up to Jesus, he would quickly and firmly, and I might add, not pulling any punches, rebuke and correct them. He told the Pharisees they were hypocrites. He said, you're whitewashed tombs.

Now that may not mean a lot to an Alabamian, but to a Jew, death was unclean and you didn't have anything to do with anything associated with death. That was a defiling thing. He not only said you're associated with death.

He said, you are death. You're whitewashed tombs. He said, you're a bunch of snakes.

You're a bunch of vipers. He said, you're blind leading the blind. He was no respecter of persons.

He played up to no one. He was not a phony. He was true.

Well, not only that, I picked out another word, lowly. He was lowly and he did have meekness. He had that beautiful balance that we strive for.

Jesus was lowly and in the sense that he would welcome those that others would reject. Remember him eating with publicans and sinners and the Jews would try to find some sort of error. They're always twisting and slandering his name, trying to find some way to bring his image down in the eyes of the people.

But he didn't care. He would, he would fellowship with the lowly, no respecter of persons. Everybody was equal before Jesus Christ.

Men like Lazarus or rather Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a short guy, wasn't he? That climbed up the tree. Good.

Got my story right. Zacchaeus, probably a wealthy and influential man. I mean, if you use a tax scale in that day, you had a lot of money.

He welcomed the up and up, but he also welcomed the lowest of the low. We've already talked about that as we talked about his compassion. What is my point to you? Listen to me.

God let us see his son. Let us hear his son. And in the case of our forefathers in the faith, they touched him and they handled him, John says.

And Paul, as he writes to the church at Ephesus says, we praise God, the father, because we know something of him through his son, Jesus Christ. But that's not all. Secondly, not only did he send his son, not only did we see his son and he is in every respect incomparable.

Thirdly, he sacrificed his son for us. Now that tells us something about our heavenly father. He sacrificed his son for us.

Any of you want to line up tonight to give your son or your daughter to be sacrificed for someone else? That's what our heavenly father did for us. Just to sort of reiterate this truth and seal it into our hearts and minds, I want you to turn to Psalm 22 and I just want to do a running reading of this text as some have called this the fifth gospel as it so clearly depicts in prophetic spirit what our Lord endured on the cross for us. And so we get a picture of God the father and his unfathomable love for us as we see what he did to and through his son for us.

Psalm 22 verse one, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning. Oh my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer and by night, but I have no rest. So here's the statement of Jesus from the cross.

When God, the father gave his son, Jesus Christ to be the sin bearer for us and God, the father cannot look on sin. So he abandoned his son in that hour of need for us. Notice what Jesus responds to his father, though he has forsaken him and though he turned his back on his son because his son was the sin bearer.

Verse three, yet you are holy. Oh, you who are enthroned upon the praises of Israel in you, our fathers trusted, they trusted and you delivered them to you. They cried out and were delivered in you.

They trusted. We're not disappointed. Verse six, but I am a worm and not a man.

Can you imagine the son of God, the holy son of God saying, I'm a worm. You say, how did he become a worm? He became a worm because he took your sin. And the father looked on him as if he had sinned your sin, though he never sinned.

And in that sense, he became a worm, a wretched worm and the eyes of the heavenly father. Verse seven, all who see me sneer at me. They separate with the lip.

They wag the head saying, commit yourself to the Lord. Let him deliver him. Let him rescue him because he delights in him.

Yet you are he who brought me forth from the womb. You made me trust when upon my mother's breast upon you, I was cast from my birth. You've been my God from my mother's womb.

Be not far from me for trouble is near for there are none to help the abandonment of our Lord, the loneliness of our Lord on the cross. There's none to help. Verse 12, many bulls have surrounded me.

Strong bulls of basin have encircled me. Uh, the psalmist uses the descriptive words of violent beast to explain how he's being treated through this crucifixion scene. Verse 13, they open wide their mouth at me as a ravaging and roaring lion.

I am poured out like water and all my bones are out of joint. My heart is like wax. It is melted within me.

My strength is dried up like a potsherd and my tongue cleaves to my jaws and you lay me in the dust of the earth for dogs have surrounded me. This picture is what we might call a junkyard dog, a wild mean dog, a band of evildoers has encompassed me. They pierced my hands and my feet.

I can count all my bones. They look, they stare at me. They divide my garments among them and for my clothing, they cast lots.

He sacrificed his son for us. No wonder Paul begins his letter to the church at Ephesus and as he's beginning that letter, he says, praise be God the father. Well, is he like my father? Is he like the fathers we know on earth? No, no, no, no, no.

Praise be God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ. If you know his son and what he did in and through his son for us, you know something about him and then you can't help but praise him that he would do so much for us. We praise God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ because he sent his son.

We praise God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ because we saw his son. We praise God the father of our Lord Jesus Christ because he gladly sacrificed his son on Calvary's cross. Now let me ask you something.

If you are a born-again child of God, you're regenerate of the Holy Spirit and there is an abiding and hopefully growing love for Christ in your life. You can't know this about the father and it not stir praise in your heart to him. And the more you know of it, the deeper will be your doxology toward him.

That's Paul's point. Well, first of all, we praise God the father because we know his son. That's what Paul's pointing out here.

But secondly, he continues in verse three and I summarize it with these wording, this wording rather under Roman numeral two, we praise him for the blessings of salvation. And we'll just sort of hit on this a little bit. And then we'll look at it exhaustively in the next several weeks as we look at verses four through 14.

So we praise him for the blessings of salvation. Let me give you three sub headings here. The first one is these blessings are all inclusive blessings.

All inclusive. Notice how he words it there in verse three, blessed are praised God, the father of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why? Well, first of all, because he's God, the father of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And secondly, because he's blessed us with every spiritual blessing. The word every is the key word to this some point. Every spiritual blessing.

Now here's what that means. It means the whole load of heavenly blessings has been dumped on us. Every spiritual blessing.

Now think with me for a moment. An omnipotent God, can you imagine how many blessings he could have? And he says through Christ, all of those are hours. Now it's sort of like, uh, when mom and dad buy you something for Christmas, but it's not Christmas yet.

You don't get it. It's yours, but you just don't have it in your hands yet. Well, a lot of these are hours, but we just don't experience them in the fall yet, but they're still all hours.

The Greek language that Paul uses here uses the Aris tense verb has blessed us. Aris tense means finished action in past time with continuing results in past time. He gave us all every spiritual blessing and it continues to be ours forevermore.

And by the way, if you could lose your salvation, he'd have to take it back. And he's not an Indian giver. He's given it all to us and it abides with us forever.

Now, not only are, are these blessings all inclusive, we have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Secondly, these are superior blessings. These are superior blessings.

Now these blessings that we receive in Christ pertain to our new nature, our regenerate nature. Now, when we get new spiritual blessings that pertain to our new nature, the new man, they affect both our soul and our body. I mean, they bless us both ways.

Now listen, God is the God of material blessings. The Bible teaches that over and over and over again. Now, one of the things that I think some of our friends and particularly the charismatic churches have done is to make some absolute law out of some of these scriptures on material blessings.

And they're never meant to be that way. God in his sovereignty sometimes blesses materially and God is his sovereignty sometimes does not, but he does bring material blessings. And I want to say something else to you.

He does not necessarily bring those to those who seemingly are most deserving. He's sovereign. He does what he chooses, when he chooses, with whom he chooses for his own purposes, period.

But he does tell those of us who have been blessed maybe more materially that we are to give more generously to his work. That is a consistency in scripture. A couple of verses that show that he does give material blessings, Proverbs 8, 21.

Proverbs 8, 21 says, to endow those who love me with wealth that I may fill their treasuries. So as a general rule, God delights in blessing the treasuries of those who love him. You may say, Brother Jeff, I love him, but my treasury ain't real blessed.

Well, I'd like to say to you, keep living for him and keep loving him. You might be surprised by the time you retire how much he'll bless you in ways you never dreamed possible. Mark chapter 10.

Let me just read that to you that shows that God is in the material blessing business, not as an absolute. He's sovereign, does sometimes to some and does not to others. But listen to what Jesus says.

Jesus said, truly I say to you, there is no one who's left houses or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or farms for my sake and for the gospel sake. Now, can I stop right there? Don't forget that verse. First, there's a leaving of stuff before there's a getting of stuff.

These folks left expecting nothing in return, only the joy of following their master. They left houses, they left brothers and sisters, mother or father. Of course, in this culture, in this day, often to leave your family to follow Jesus didn't just mean geographical separation, it mean they abandoned you because they were faithful Jews or Greeks and they hated Christ in the way of Christianity.

I don't know about you, but I'm not seeing too much of that kind of sacrifice for our Lord today. And that may be why we don't see as much of the miraculous blessing materially perhaps at times. And I know the guys at TV would like to teach us that if you just quote it right or name it right or claim it right, you get it.

But Jesus said, no, it's when you abandon and leave and lose for me, expecting nothing in return, I'm prone to bring it back a hundredfold. Notice what he says in verse 30, but he will receive a hundred times as much now in the present age, houses and brothers and sisters. Isn't it neat how you get saved and you get all these new brothers and sisters.

Never now you say, Lord, didn't I supposed to really get that brother and sister, but most of them are pretty good and mothers and children and farms need a new farm. Give the one you got up now and see if I can get another one. Oh, along with persecutions.

Don't leave that one out. I like my new house and I like my new farm. I like my new brothers and sisters, but what about this persecution thing that goes with the package? Because you're not home yet.

You're in enemy territory as you're walking with the King of light in a world of darkness. By the way, if you're trying to honor God and live for God and walk with God, you're going to have some persecution down here. It's just inevitable.

And what's so hard is it comes from people you didn't expect it to come from. That's what makes it so hard for me. I picked out the people that are persecuting me.

You know, some of them actually like me and some others don't, but then he says, but in the age to come eternal life, well, I'm just saying all that to say, God is the material blesser, but in Christ Jesus, these are superior blessings because they not only bless us for time right now, but they also bless for eternity. Matter of fact, let me give you a lineup of comparing the spiritual blessings with material blessings. And God is the giver of both.

First of all, the spiritual blessings of course are eternal and the material blessings are temporal. That's one way they're superior. Secondly, the spiritual blessings, the proportions are equal.

Everyone gets all of them, but the temporal material blessings, they're not equal. In this age, God's not blessing everybody materially equally. That's not his plan.

And you just might as well get over that and rejoice with what God's given you. If he's given you millions, rejoice in it and be generous. If he's given you just enough to pay the bills, rejoice over it and just go on and don't be envious of those who have.

It's not equal down here in the material realm, but it is equal in the spiritual eternal realm. Equal proportions. Thirdly, the spiritual blesses both body and soul.

The material blessings don't necessarily bless your soul at all. Fourthly, the spiritual blessings are untouched by sin, but material blessings sometimes come with their own sins and temptations with them and are stumbling blocks for us. So these are superior blessings.

They're all inclusive. You get everything. They're far superior to the material blessings of this age.

And then lastly, they are grace blessings. Grace blessings. And that's what we see in the following verses.

And just to conclude, I want to run through verses 14 through 15, the text that we'll be looking at more closely in the future. Now, here he goes. And as he runs through these things, well, I think our job is to keep reflecting back on the beginning of verse three, and that is praise God for what he's done.

So as we look at this, it ought to be establishing us more thoroughly in theology and therefore spontaneously erupting in more true doxology. Verse four, just as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before him in love. God chose you in Christ Jesus before the foundation of the world that you would one day be holy and blameless before him in love.

Now, what's Paul saying? Paul's saying, you just need to accept that and praise God for it. Praise God for that. You talk about security.

Is that not securing? To know that that's truth? Well, look at verse five. He predestined us to adoption as sons. He didn't just bring us in his kingdom as some lowly slave.

He said, I'm going to elevate you all the way up to equal status with my son, Jesus Christ. To adopt us as sons through Jesus Christ himself according to the kind intention of his will. It's not according to the man who wills or the man who runs, but on God who has mercy.

It's according to his will that he did this. I don't like the way he did it. It doesn't sound fair.

It doesn't matter what you think. He did it according to his will. He didn't ask you about your will.

He did it according to his will. What he wants you to do is praise God for it. You see, Paul's not writing to lost people.

He's writing to save people, hoping they'll be overwhelmed at the truth that they're going to uncover as he reveals it to them. Verse six, why did he do all this? To the praise of the glory of his grace, which he freely bestowed on us in the beloved. In him, we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace.

Redemption is that word that they took from the slave market. If you went to the slave market, often you could pay the price and emancipate or redeem that slave from a captivity or slavery. And that's what Jesus did when he died on the cross and shed his precious blood for us.

Now notice verse eight, we're talking about grace. He lavished it on us in all wisdom and insight. God didn't just give us some grace or part grace or even a lot of grace.

He lavished grace on us. You know what Paul's wanting you to do? He's wanting you to say, praise God for how wonderful he is toward us to have done all of that. Verse nine, he made known to us the mystery of his will.

In other words, these very truths were mysterious to the saints of old. The Old Testament saints had insights into Christ and his coming, but they knew nothing of these great truths, but he's revealing them to the Ephesians and revealing them to us. He made known to us the mystery of his will, according to his kind intention, which he purposed in him with a view to an administration suitable to the fullness of times.

That is the summing up of all things are suitable to the fullness of time. That is the summing up of all things in Christ, things in the heavens and things on the earth. So one day, everything's going to be summed up in Jesus Christ.

That is everything's going to be rendered back into full submission to him and belong to him. And of course, we'll belong to him. Verse 11, in him also we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to his purpose, who works all things after the counsel of his will.

Now there he goes again with that phrase, according to his will. But Jeff, I don't understand this. I can't figure this.

I can't balance it in my mind. That's because it's not according to your finite will, it's according to his infinite will. He just wants you to say, praise God for doing it.

Praise your name for such a wonderful salvation. Verse 12, to the end that we who are the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of his glory. Well, why did he do all these wonderful things for us all the way from before the foundation of the world? And then in time and space history, Jesus came and shed his blood and redeemed us from sin.

And he did it all after the counsel of his will. Well, the end of verse 12, to the praise of his glory. So that we could say, man, you're wonderful, man, you're glorious.

Verse 13, in him you also after listening to the message of the truth, the gospel of your salvation, having also believed you were sealed in him with the Holy Spirit of promise. He said, what I've told you is not enough. When you were converted, the Holy Spirit came and lived inside of you and he's become a seal or literally a pledge, an earnest payment.

The fact that you're aware that the Holy Spirit lives in you is the down payment, the promise that you're going to get the full dose when you get to heaven. You got a little touch of glory. Now the Holy Spirit lives in you.

You're going to be surrounded in glory later. And it's as good as done. You just don't enjoy it all yet.

What is Paul doing? He said, I want you to praise the Father. I'm telling you all this knowledge, this theology, so that you'll overflow in some doxology. And praise the Father who has given us a pledge of our inheritance with a view to the redemption of God's own possession.

Now, Paul, why are you doing all this again? Well, he repeats it one more time, to the praise of his glory. So he begins this whole section, praise be to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who's blessed us with every spiritual blessing. And then he takes verses 4 through 14 to lay out those spiritual blessings.

And we're going to dive into that and dissect it. And Paul's goal is God's goal. And it'll certainly be my goal that our praise, our reverence, and therefore our service and our obedience will grow and grow and grow and grow.

And God will get more glory, because we have better knowledge and we can praise Him according to true knowledge. Because a true theology will produce a true doxology. The preceding message comes from the Expository Preaching Ministry of Senior Pastor Teacher, Dr. Jeff Knoblett.

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