

(Ephesians) the Riches of Grace

by Jeff Noblit

Jeff Noblit's sermon explores the profound riches of grace as presented in Ephesians, emphasizing God's unmerited favor and the transformative power of redemption through Christ.

Duration: 1:17:49

Scripture: Matthew 5:20, Matthew 16:18, John 10:27, Romans 3:23, Ephesians 1:8, Ephesians 1:12, Revelation 5:13

Topics: "Grace"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the concept of freedom through redemption in Christ Jesus. He explains that through Christ, believers are set free from the enslaving power of sin. The preacher highlights that sin brings condemnation from God, regardless of the number of sins committed. He also discusses the divine gift of insight and wisdom that God lavishes upon believers. The sermon emphasizes that salvation is a gift from God, not by chance or human choice, but by God's sovereign will. The preacher references Ephesians 2:8-9 to support the message of salvation by grace through faith.

Transcript

Ephesians chapter 1, let's turn to this morning as we continue going through this marvelous New Testament epistle. And I've got a question for you, as we were singing that great hymn, Amazing Grace, how many of you would agree that that's sort of the Baptist anthem? Would you agree with me on that? I set you up. Do you know there's a lot about election in that hymn? A lot about the sovereignty of God and salvation in that hymn.

There's a lot about putting it on God, not on us in that hymn. As a matter of fact, our Baptist forefathers predominantly taught and believed that great doctrine. And how can you do an exposition of Ephesus chapter 1 and not believe in that doctrine? Man, hadn't it been rich? T'was grace that taught my heart to fear.

It wasn't just some good thing in me that said I'm going to fear this God, I'm going to reverence Him and respect Him, no, no, no. Grace first brought me to the point of realizing there's a holy God and I'm nothing before Him but a lost sinner. Grace taught my heart to fear and grace my fears relieved.

That's a Baptist doctrine, folks. And don't give me any of this silly nonsense where Brother Jeff's not preaching evangelistic Baptist doctrine. Oh, you're so silly and naive and misdirected.

And I want to say something to you very clearly. As long as I am the pastor in this church and the pastor in this pulpit, this church will be very evangelistic. But we will not deny the glorious truth of God and how that evangelism happens, amen? Let's stand on both great truths, a passion for souls but a glory to God and God alone who wins those souls and saves those souls.

Well I believe you guys are fired up today. Okay, Ephesus chapter 1 beginning in verse 7. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His kind intention which He purposed in Him with view to an administration suitable to the fullness of times that is the summing up of all things in Christ.

I love that phrase. It's going to be all summed up in Him folks. Verse 10 last phrase, things in the heavens and things on the earth.

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 to the end that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory. I've entitled this section the riches of grace. The riches of grace.

Now if you look at verse 7 again it says there, let me just use verse 7 as sort of a foundation stone for this section of scripture because it really is all about that phrase the last part of verse 7 according to the riches of grace. That is all that Paul is talking about here and all these glorious magnificent truths that he's laying out about God's wonderful work of salvation for us all is wrapped up in one phrase it's just the riches of grace. The riches of grace.

Now once again what is grace? I'm going to repeat this often because I want it just to meld into your bone marrow to the innermost part of our being carrying with us that glorious truth and then when these false teachers come along some of them are sweet folks and good folks and well intending but they come along and say add works or add church membership or add these religious rites and rituals to your grace and then you have it. There will be something in you that says no that's not grace. Grace is God bestowing benefit and blessing to us that we can in no wise earn merit or achieve.

Grace is God bestowing the blessings and benefits toward us that in no way we could possibly merit or achieve them but equally so grace is God withholding from us the proper judgment that we should receive. Riches of grace. Charles Hodge the great Presbyterian theologian has just incredible commentaries.

He gave these three thoughts about grace so just let this sort of build upon and amplify what I just said. Grace is God accepting those who are entirely destitute of merit. Don't make those words big or hard destitute means there's nothing you don't have anything to offer and God accepts people who are entirely destitute of merit and we must repent when we find ourselves getting into the mind pattern or the thinking where we think well God does his part then I do my part which means God gets most of the credit but I get a little credit no that's not grace.

Grace is God accepting those who are entirely destitute of merit. By the way that's good news for lost depraved unworthy sinners. Hodge further elaborates and says grace is God providing satisfaction and acceptance in our behalf.

Satisfaction and acceptance on our behalf and here's what that means. God is holy and a part of his holiness is that he is just and a just God must fully punish all unholiness or he's unjust. Now how is he

going to be satisfied how is his justice going to be satisfied well that's what grace is God provided for your satisfaction through the death of his own son on the cross.

God satisfied the demands of holy justice by letting his son hang on the cross turning his back on his son pouring the wrath of God on his son that we deserve and then when he saw his son receiving that wrath and taking that judgment for us God says my justice is satisfied and I accept them now unconditionally based on the meritorious work of my son on their behalf. That's grace that is grace. A third thought here from Hodge grace is bestowing redemption and all its benefits without regard to the goodness of man.

You see friend are you listening to me in our shallowness in our inevitable tendency to glaze over and hop through the Bible instead of doing thorough expositions we've come up with this watered down shallow gospel again whereby man does so much and God does so much and they get together no that's not grace it's God accepting man though man has nothing to offer or bring and yet God saying in my great love I cannot deny my great justice you see love is a characteristic of God but justice is an equally immutable unchangeable characteristic of God and God cannot say I'll just let my love rule and forget justice no in his driving love he sent his son to pay for our sin so that his love is satisfied but his justice is satisfied and we unworthy sinners are now saved through Christ Jesus.

It's all grace.

Now notice how Paul words it here in Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 7 again we're in the introduction here just laying the foundation the last phrase according to the riches of his grace according to he doesn't say he saves us or redeems us out of the riches of his grace it says he saves us or redeems us according to the riches of his grace in other words God doesn't go into the storehouse of grace and scoop up a shovel full of grace like one would scoop up a measure of grain and just pour it on us no he's not doing that it God didn't go into the safe of grace and look into the safe of grace and select out a few choice gems or stones like one might select a few choice gems or stones out of a precious jewelry collection God didn't reach into his well of grace and dip out a bucket full of

grace and pour it on us like one might lower their bucket down into an old-fashioned well no notice what he says in verse 8 as Paul can amplifies and elaborates on that phrase the riches of grace with this phrase in verse 8 which he lavished on us I like the new American standard word lavished on us no what God did you see is more akin to what happens when the water in the lock at Wilson Dam is released have you ever been there and seen that surely you have but you know we've been around here for a while most of us have and we're somewhat used to that but I want to challenge you to do something in the next few weeks if you're new in the area or if you've been here a long time go down there and park in that visitors parking area and go over there and and wait until they let that water out

of that lock because that's grace right there that's lavishing grace right there that's that's God pouring it on us not just taking a portion out but pouring it on us because when that water comes out of that lock there is a gushing swirl of water billowing up below the dam and it continues to gush and billow until the entire lock is depleted of water that is the grace he put on us riches of grace lavishing grace now I've got to add this in right here because you got to keep remembering this remembering this remembering this remembering this why did he do it so he might get praise for how wonderful he is not that you might feel good about how meritorious or worthy or desirable you were to save that is abominable thinking it's how wonderful he is that he is a God now listen to me who

inherently has the capacity to have that kind of grace and Paul writes these things so that we might look at this and we might listen to me we might just end the church service and quiet all of the glories of God that would have such grace the riches of grace lavishing grace well let's talk about now some of the particulars that Paul points out for us as we continue through chapter 1 and we'll go into verse 7 and look at the first phrase there in verse 7 and this is our first major point and that is the grace of redemption and if God doesn't get through with us quickly we'll just this may be our only point today the grace of redemption look at there in verse 7 in him we have redemption now notice first of all something that keeps coming up and in the New Testament I think particularly in

Paul's writings that phrase in him or the equivalent thereof sometimes it's in Christ but that phrase occurs almost 170 times in the New Testament God wants us to get this and again it might be good I'm not suggesting anything radical here God forbid we study the Bible and change anything that we're used to but it might be better if we begin to discuss with one another and check on one another not in terms of are you saved but in terms of are you in Christ because that's the term the Bible uses more are you one of those who are in Christ well wait a minute I prayed that prayer well that's wonderful and God does save a lot of people at the moment when they pray the prayer but it's not because they prayed the prayer it's the faith that God birthed in their hearts that saved but if you're in

Christ scripture gives a lot of characteristics a lot of identifying marks that let you know if you're in Christ or in him that might be a healthier more effective more scriptural way to converse with one another about whether or not we're in the faith do you know Paul told the Corinthians to test yourself and see if you're in the faith now I know we've got a few pastors scattered around in here and and like myself and any pastor who's honest in the evangelical church or Baptist church today will tell you it's it's so grievous to see so many people who profess to have been saved but never live for God never make anything or never have really any evidence or any fruit that's lasting at all in their lives and it could be because we've taught people some hoops to jump through and they

sincerely are doing what they know to do but we haven't thoroughly biblically lovingly given them all the truth and therefore we're sending a lot of people to hell with some false assurances when we ought to be spending more time in the word with them about this truth well that's just something we're growing in and we're not doing anything rash or radical we're just growing to understand this better in him and already Paul says in verse four we were chosen in him from the foundation of the world we don't know all that that means but it's glorious beyond compare to think about before the world began we individually specifically were chosen in him talk about security of your salvation and verse five he talked about us being predestined which means marked out beforehand we are identified and

marked out beforehand through Jesus Christ or you could say in him now we come to verse seven and it says in him we have redemption so all this glorious stuff happens because we're in him I'm in Christ now let's talk about this specific thing that verse seven points out and that is we have redemption in him look at look at what it says in him we have redemption now the word redemption has various shades of meaning in the New Testament but in this particular setting here's what the word redemption means it means bought from slavery and set free never to be a slave again that's just glorious bought or purchased out of slavery you are already a slave claimed by another master but you have been bought purchased by Christ's blood out of slavery set free and you can never be a slave again

pastor can I lose my salvation pastor can I be lost if I'm truly saved pastor can I go back it all depends on how good a job Jesus did of buying you out of slavery if he really paid the full price and purchased you out

of slavery and set you free never to be enslaved again you're never going to be enslaved again in Satan ourself our sins dominion and the consequential wrath and judgment that comes if you're in that enslavement just some cross references here that amplify this a little bit Matthew chapter 20 verse 28 just as the son of man did not come to be served but to serve now by the way that's a good thing if he came to be served if there was some kind of service we did to him we'd never gotten to him because we couldn't come we were dead we were blind we were lost in our sin but he

came to us and he didn't come to be served but to serve now how did he serve us well one key part and to give his life a ransom for many that ransom word is the same idea of redeemed it means to pay the price and retrieve them from their present or past situation Titus 2 verse 14 who gave him his life and gave himself for us that he might redeem us from every lawless deed and to purify for himself a people for his own possession zealous for good deeds now here we have a little different shade of meaning here the text shows us that in God's overall redeeming work he didn't just redeem us from sin and sins cursed and from sins judgment he also redeemed us from a lifestyle of sinning to walk in a lifestyle of holiness our good deeds that's a part of redemption so there's a shade of meaning

there that emphasizes that we are redeemed not only from the penalty of sin eternal loss and everlasting punishment in hell but we are also redeemed from the power of sin that sin no longer is the ruling master of our lives just a shade of meaning there now 1st Peter chapter 1 verses 18 and 19 knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers but with precious blood as of a lamb unblemished and spotless the blood of Christ now here Paul is writing it's the backdrop of Judaistic works the Jews believe that and a lot of these Judaizers their notion was well you take Jesus and you take grace and you add the works of the Old Testament and with grace and works you got the whole package and I'm telling you

that would just send Paul into orbit his point was you don't need any of that stuff any of those works in any of Judaism or any of the law to be redeemed and be God's child that's a work that God does for you through his precious blood all your gold and all your silver and all your merit and all your works and all your righteousness and all the joining of churches are being baptized in baptisteries are partaking of the sacraments including the Lord's Supper none of that can get you a right standing before a holy God you're redeemed by the precious blood of the lamb now fortunately we don't have a culture of slavery anymore in this country praise God but in this day in the Greco-Roman world slavery was very common so when they when Paul rather wrote this letter to the church at Ephesus and

he used a term out of the slave world they knew I mean they had a vivid understanding they had almost all of them most likely had seen someone or known someone who at one time was a slave but had a redemption price paid and they'd been released from slavery and they knew the joy and the elation and the wonder of it all so they knew what this meant there were about six million slaves in the Roman Empire when Paul wrote this buying and selling of slaves was major business and it was a law in this day that a master could buy someone could buy a slave pay the redeeming price and set that slave free if he would provide the written documentation that they were now no longer in the class of slavery they were now a free man so let's break this down a little bit and I want to look at some of the

components some of the aspects of redemption full now listen full and free by grace is our redemption price has been paid released from slavery free to never be enslaved again well what are the aspects well in this text most likely Paul is referring to redemption or freedom from sin its power its penalty etc.

but I want to list two other masters that our redemption frees us from or rather that are included in the redemption that has been provided past tense verb provided for us through Christ Jesus first of all though let's talk about sin that's the first sub point sin we were held by the enslaving cords of sin now three things that I want to say about this number one sin brings the condemnation of Almighty God even one sin in your life if you could say I'll go my whole life and I've done as good as I can possibly do and I've just got one clear sin that I've ever committed and nobody could ever claim that but let's suppose you could claim that listen to what James says in James chapter 2 verse 10 for whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point he has become guilty of all God says

as far as you standing justly liable to eternal condemnation as a sinner if you just committed one sin all of your life you'll be punished as if you'd broken them all so that's the state we are in we were held by the enslaving cords of sin because just one sin would bring the condemnation of God and God's holy justice folks are you listening to me you have to continually kick out the false justice of this present age and regasp the true justice as revealed by God you see the tendency of this age is don't talk about sin and don't talk about man condemned before a holy God I mean people feel bad enough already but you know what you do if you preach that kind of shallow gospel even if you include receiving Jesus even if you include being quote evangelistic into quote but you don't preach

the truth about sin and our condemnation before God you know what you do you send a lot of happy people straight to hell you cannot be saved if you don't realize you're a sinner who needs Christ you don't need Christ just to make your marriage better even though if you come to Christ you probably will have a better marriage you don't come to Christ just to fix your problems in your life even though if you do come to Christ most likely God will fix some of those problems but by the way the Bible promises you may add a lot of things into your life that will be very difficult in the way of persecutions ridicules slander against your name once you bear Christ in this community but when you realize what a sinner you are if I just had one sin I would stand justly liable for a holy God then you

just are grateful God would save you well not only will one sin bring God's condemnation but secondly we're held by the enslaving cords of sin because even the heart attitude is sin and deserves judgment even the heart attitude is sin and deserves judgment remember the sermon on the mount as the Lord Jesus was teaching and Jesus was contrasting the self-righteousness of the Pharisees with the true righteousness of a born-again child of God and the Pharisees had this thing worked out where if they could get their outward appearance looking in a certain way they felt like they were just before God so they worked worked worked worked made sure they dotted every I and crossed every T twice so that all their outward behavior looked real good and then Jesus said this to him he said you know

something if you've hated in your heart you've committed murder as far as God's judgment goes it's not just if you've committed murder but if you hate in your heart you're liable and accountable he said you know what else it's not just if you've committed adultery if you've lusted in your heart you're guilty as an adulterer before God in other words now how many of you Pharisees now going to feel like through your human works you're acceptable before a holy God none of them could and thirdly we're held by the enslaving cords of sin because sin before we're converted is our very nature not just my behavior sin is more than the acts that you do sin is something you are before you're converted sin is a nature you possess not just a behavior you express you see you don't sin to become a

sinner you sin because you are a sinner it's who we are we're held by the cords of sin matter of fact look at Ephesians 2 again and look at verse 3 there which is a descriptive expression of the general condition all

of us are in before God saved us among them we too all now you know what all means it means all all formerly lived in the lust of our flesh indulging in the desires of the flesh and of the mind and were by nature children of wrath even as the rest that was who we are so we were held in sin on sins death row fully accountable to the wages of sin Romans 6:23 says for the wages of sin is death that's what we are and that's what we were before we were rescued by redeeming grace or might say by grace that includes redemption so far be it from us to say hey we're saved and we're

safe forever because you know we're pretty good and God had to desire something toward us and and we had some worth in us and God did this much but we've received Christ and we're pretty good anyway and together this thing's indisputable no my friend you are down down down low low low sinful sinful sinful unworthy unworthy unworthy and in redeeming love he reached way on down and got you and brought you out of that slave market of sin you see I have the assurance of my salvation because of the greatness of my God not because of something I've done well secondly I want to talk about being redeemed from Satan's kingdom not only are we redeemed from sin but the Bible teaches where's a redemption we're bought out of and brought out of Satan's kingdom we were citizens of the kingdom of

darkness we are now citizens of the kingdom of light we were citizens just of the kingdom of this world we are now the Bible says our citizenship is in heaven there's been a redemption that's happened we were hopelessly bound in this dark kingdom with darkened hearts and minds two things about that number one we were bound to coming wrath and judgment God is coming now what did Jesus say he said I've come to destroy the works of Satan and in the Bible says Satan is the God of this world Satan is behind these the godless systems of this world this world is an anti God world this world doesn't naturally put God first does it Satan's behind this world and Satan has a spiritual kingdom also and that used to be where our citizenship was and God's wrath and judgment is pointed against and it's

as if all the wrath of God is damned up in heaven and God in his sovereign purposes is holding back the judgment until the proper time and then the dam will be opened and the judgment will pour against Satan's kingdom we were bound in that kingdom but now we've been redeemed out of that but not only were we bound to wrath and condemnation being a citizen of Satan's kingdom before we were redeemed secondly we were bound to Satan's influence and control we were bound to Satan's influence on and control but he redeemed us now listen once you're redeemed Satan does have an influence but now it's it's your election as to how much influence he'll have before you're redeemed you are hopelessly and helplessly bound by him and his kingdom now he can mess with us but he does not own or control us

we have to yield to him to let him in Colossians chapter 1 verse 13 says for he delivered us from the dominion of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son well there's a third aspect of redemption that I want to mention here and that's redemption from are you ready for this one self self the big I the me first complex the the the total listen we have now now listen we have now been redeemed from the total inherent consumption to serve provide for seek pleasure for self now before you're saved you don't have any choice in that that's just who you are once you're saved you now have a choice to honor Christ or yield to self but before we were hopelessly enslaved to self-consumed living self-power self-pleasure self-gain our lives were centered around self and doesn't our

present culture glory in this we even have a magazine entitled self if you got one of those go home and burn it today I can hear the rumors now do you know they're burning books down that first Baptist now pastor said it I know I don't know they're doing it because I saw a fire a week after he said that don't you sometimes just want to tell folks why don't you go get a life talk about fishing or something leave us alone

self you see the one who yields to self honor self serve self loses everything and we were enslaved to that did you hear me you were enslaved to this honoring self that's what you were see where you're born again you get a new nature that's Christ centered not self-centered so before you're saved you're bound to yielding to self you're bound to honoring self you're bound

to serving self but you lose everything listen to Luke 924 Jesus says in Luke 924 whoever wishes to save his life that means do everything to take care of yourself think about yourself save yourself shall lose it but whoever loses his life that means says no to self wants to live a self-denying life and be Christ centered but whoever loses his life for my sake he is the one who won't save it if we go out purposing to live for ourselves save ourselves please ourselves honor ourselves yield to self you'll lose everything but if through the transforming power of the gospel and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit a new man is birthed in you then you walk forward with a new now listen capacity a new capacity to live Christ centered not self-centered and then you gain everything and lose

nothing who was it who said he is no fool who gives up that which he cannot keep to gain that which you cannot lose that a great quote I don't know but hallelujah we've been redeemed from this slavery to self the love of self now listen the love of self is the way of temporal misery and eternal loss you know if you if you talk to somebody that's full of anxiety if you talk to someone that's full of fear if you talk to someone who's depressed and you get to the root you know what the root is self they're thinking about themselves I mean aren't you you're worried about yourself you're worried about what's going to happen to me and my discovery has been I allow some of those things to move into my life when I stop walking the crucified life and I'm thinking about me too much and God has to

get my attention I have to start repenting again and get self out of the way and get Christ in the middle but hallelujah as a child of God I now have that capacity I didn't have before before I was enslaved as in the slave market of self-consumed living and it was the very thing that was ruining and destroying me but now after redemption I can begin to do what Paul says Paul said I die what's the word daily you know why because you'll do good one day boy had a great quiet time meditating on my scriptures I didn't put myself first I want to honor Christ today in my life but you know what you go to bed that night you wake up the next morning guess who's back on the throne self is and you have to die again I am crucified with Christ nevertheless I live yet not I but Christ lives in me in the

life which I now live in this flesh I'm still down here in this flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me I'm no longer living enslaved to that cruel task master of self so what has God done God through the blood of Jesus Christ paying the full ransom our redemption payment paid the money down purchased me and now he has redeemed me from slavery to sin and all its consequences in judgment he's redeemed me from Satan's kingdom and all the wrath and condemnation that's coming there and he's redeemed me from self being consumed by living for me which leads to ruin and destruction and eternal loss well amplifying how God did this look back at our text Ephesians chapter 1 notice what he says in verse 7 in him we have redemption through his blood folks you

and I are not about a religion of good thoughts and good intentions and well-being for mankind now some of that is in our total religion but that's not what we're about primarily ours is a religion built on actual literal historical fact the actual actual literal historical fact is that Jesus Christ actually literally lived he actually literally went to the cross they actually and literally drove nails through his hands a spike through his feet strong men actually and literally raised the cross and put the vertical beam down into a pre-dug hole in the ground and his body tore and ripped as the weight fell against the pull of gravity and his precious and holy

blood was spilled and poured out paying the redeeming price hope that grabs you a whole hope today he's walking by you and you see

the nail pierced hands hope you sense him coming by you and there's a spear hole in his side and a spike print that's been in his feet and when you think I'm free from sin it no longer rules me and controls me I'm free from Satan's kingdom no longer citizen that kingdom I'm free from a life controlled and consumed with thinking about me how did that happen nail pierced hands nail pierced feet crown of thorns spitting on him punching him thrusting the spear in his side mocking him and ridiculing him and most likely folks there wasn't a loincloth he was exposed naked with ultimate shame and humiliation the redemption cost his blood and you tell me how you can walk out this door and live like you did before how can you walk out the door and say God I'll give you sort of a halfway commitment

when everything is because of redemption's cost and the price he paid well they tell us today make it amusing make it entertaining make it fun make it happy and people will come I want a church full of people in love with their redeeming Lord yeah we're gonna have fun we're gonna have picnics we're gonna do fireworks we're gonna have wild game fellowships we like to do all that but that's not the foundation of what we are if we all go broke and have to sell our homes and there's nothing left and we have to share our food and our clothes just to get by we'll still have joy we'll still have peace and we'll still be happy because our Redeemer lives he's paid for us and we'll be his forever amen isn't that good news I'll be so glad when the materialistic prosperity me centered commercialized

entertainment carnival circus churches disappear and all you have left is the pure bride of Christ that just want to serve him and just want to be faithful and just want to give tithes and offerings and just want to minister through their small groups because it does something for them oh what morbid self-centeredness no because of their Lord who's redeemed them with his precious precious precious blood we were like slaves bought and sold in the slave market passed from one cruel master to another hopelessly helplessly mercilessly passed between Satan sin and self and one day a stranger showed up at the slave market while I was standing on the block humiliated embarrassed and he paid the highest price for me and I said master what shall I do for you he said you're free never to be a slave

again but I'll tell you what I'm going to do matter of fact I'm a master you've never heard of I own everything I rule everything I'm master of everything tell you what I'm going to do I'm not just going to set you free I'll make you a son of mine that way you you'll be on the title deed everything I've got whoo isn't that good news that is a redemption folks you let the false teacher this world preach their works religion I'm going to glory in the freeness of grace and redemption praise his holy name he paid the dead in full and my citizenship has been transferred I'm no longer in this this kingdom of Satan I'm in the kingdom of God he paid the dead in full and sin now has no lasting hold listen I'm no longer a sinner who sins I'm now a saint whose new purpose and pattern is to obey God

though I do sometimes sin big difference there he paid the price in full so now I'm free to live for Christ and not with a morbid consumption of myself and he has done more for me than I could ever do for myself and I now live for him and no longer for the petrified enslavement of serving self I've been redeemed and it's all all all grace hallelujah what a Savior the second major point the grace of forgiveness the grace of forgiveness he continues there in verse 7 let's just read it all in him we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of grace so Paul wants to bring out another component Paul turns the gem of grace and another facet is illuminated before our eyes and that is the grace of forgiveness this rich and lavishing grace

includes the forgiveness of all of our trespasses now once again friend we must be reminded that God's law is just God's law is holy and because God's law is an expression of who he is his law is immutable that is it cannot change for God to take the moral standards the absolutes that are in his law and to alter them would be for him to alter his very self he can't alter himself because he's perfect he's immutable he's unchangeable so his law cannot change but we're all transgressors before God we have all broken his law so just punishment must be measured out to all because all are transgressors now here's some things again that we need to think about in terms of the depth of our transgressions the Bible says in James I referred to it earlier that if you break one commandment if you are

able to go your whole life and break just one commandment God says you're guilty as if you've broken them all secondly the Bible teaches that this includes heart motives if you have a heart motive Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount of hating a brother you're guilty already of murder at least in the eyes of a just God if you have a heart that lust after someone of the opposite sex the Bible says you've already committed adultery in your heart and you're accountable before God as a lawbreaker a transgressor and here's a third aspect of this God is omniscient therefore God never forgets what you've done he knows everything you've ever done everything you've ever thought every motive or intention that's ever reigned in your heart God knows and even though he's forgiven you he does not

forget it but here's the beautiful thing about it being omniscient he can't forget it but he does not hold it against you for punishment ever ever again now Sina didn't that magnify how big he is in my own personal experience I've had a person or two that hadn't done me just right in my life and I'm prone in my flesh to hold grudges or even get bitter and have to repent of that not let that reside in my life but we have a nice little helper you know what that is one of the nice little helpers we have in these fallen limited frames is we're not omniscient and we do forget some things so sometimes it's a little easier to get over something because time passes and you forget some of it but God never forgets anything but he fully forgives and never holds it against you in any way as a grudge

or punishment now that's grace that shows you how big God is and how wonderful he is he remembers it all but he fully forgives and the text tells us in the flow of the context it's all through his blood the middle of verse 7 tells us it's through his actual literal death on the cross whereby God now listen God looked on Jesus as if he had committed all the transgressions we have committed God looked upon him as if he were a lawbreaker because we're lawbreakers and God laid that punishment on him and the verdict of death and the judgment of death was flung on Christ there and he shed that precious blood and that blood on the cross covers all of our transgressions now are you listening all of the transgressions of my past all of the transgressions of my present and all of the transgressions

of my future you see Jesus was an eternal God is the eternal God rather he is one of infinite worth and an eternal being with infinite worth could pay for an eternity of punishment for us in a finite time and that's exactly what he did when he died on the cross but this forgiveness is a part of the rich and lavishing grace God has put on the children of God one of our problems and one of my problems is is as we go through life walking in this unbelievable grace we forget the heinous and greatness of our transgressions before a holy and just God and we forget again how deeply abhorrent and how deeply and strongly offensive law breaking is to God because we're not just breaking a law that God designed because God thought this law was a good idea the law is an expression of who he is it's an

affront to him yet in grace he fully forgives all of our transgressions.

You see it's grace when the sun rises on the just and the unjust the theologians call this common grace all men are the benefactors the receivers of grace it's grace when the sun rises it's grace when the rain falls it's grace when we enjoy family and friends it's grace when we're able to eat a meal or enjoy clothing or shelter but there's a special grace that God bestows on his own and the Bible text tells us here he gave the full measure of grace to us when he gave his precious son to bleed and die on the cross that all of our transgressions might be forgiven the priceless blood of Christ is the measure of the wealth of God's unmerited favor his grace that he has extended toward those who are his.

So Paul wants to point out here the grace of forgiveness there's grace and redemption we've been bought back by the paid price of his blood out of the slave market of Satan's sin and self and now we're the possession of God where his very own son and joint heirs with him.

Then he says there's a grace of forgiveness all of our sin is all forgiven all of our transgressions are covered in this grace. Now number three another aspect Paul points out is the grace of new understanding. The grace of new understanding look at it there in verse 8 the last half and down through verse 9. In all wisdom and insight he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his kind intention which he purposed in him.

Now he says in all wisdom and insight he made known the mystery of his will. You see being his child or therefore being in Christ and that's that phrase Paul uses over and over again we begin to understand things that we could not see before. Now here's a little quiz.

Who was Jesus pointing this out to in John chapter 3? Who was it? Who wanted to grasp it? Who wanted to see it in John 3 but Jesus said it's not of human reason and intellect. It's Nicodemus. What did Jesus say very clearly to Nicodemus? Nicodemus unless you're born again unless the sovereign Holy Spirit births new life in you and therefore enables you to see who I am and what this is all about and what you are and how you need me you'll never see it.

Unless you're born again you cannot see. You won't see it the kingdom of God. Why did Jesus on many occasions said he who has ears to hear let him hear.

They heard the words but they couldn't comprehend they couldn't grasp. Now listen there's a new understanding of the great and wonderful ways of God. Now listen that begins to unfold to us after we're truly saved and all of that wonderful new understanding and I hope by the grace of God, God uses me to help deepen the aspects of this understanding as we all sit under the preaching of the word as you grow in this new understanding that's all a grace gift from God.

You're getting in on something the other folks don't get. A special grace that gives you a new understanding of the ways of God. Now Satan blinds the eyes of the unbelieving the Bible says.

Those who reject Christ, those who refuse to put their faith and trust in Christ there is a blindness that comes over them and some of these folks are wonderful people as far as just having a neighbor or an acquaintance and they're moral people and they're upstanding people and here in the Bible Belt culture many of them in fact are faithful in churches but they cannot receive spiritual truth. They don't get it. They don't have a divine enablement to see God's truth and if you've been saved very long and grown very much you've bumped into people like that.

I don't know how many times I've heard someone talk about some rebel, some person who is opposing clearly the things of God but they say, but brother Jeff they're so sweet and they're so loving. So? Mother Teresa was sweet and loving but she didn't understand the things of God or she wouldn't try to work her way in heaven by serving those people in India. This is a miraculous gift when Jesus was preaching on the earth the leaders of the Jews particularly the scribes and the Pharisees and the religious people in general rejected Christ.

They couldn't see it. They couldn't understand it. What did Jesus say about this? Well Matthew 11.25 records his statement about this.

He says, I praise thee O Father, Lord of heaven and earth that thou didst hide these things from the wise and intelligent and didst reveal them to babes. Wow! Jesus says God the Father I want to praise you that I have as I have proclaimed your truth. Many have rejected it and many cannot see it and receive it because God the Father you hid it from them but you've revealed it to those whom folks would least likely think would be able to understand spiritual truth.

The babes, those who were not the religious authorities, those who were not schooled in the theology schools of Jerusalem. The common ordinary people generally received Christ, grasped who he was, put their faith in him or many of them did certainly not all of them but generally speaking the religious leaders couldn't see it. Why? Because it's divinely imparted.

It's a part of grace. It's a gift of grace. So when you sit out there and you start to get an understanding of the great workings of God and the wonderful ways God works and the wonderful ways God saves.

All these aspects of election and predestination and glorification and justification as God just grows you in your understanding there. Don't ever sit back there and say, boy I must be bright, I'm getting some of this. No, say praise you Father that you've opened my heart to an understanding I don't deserve to have.

Think about the many things that God gives us as we have these or rather we've been gifted with the grace of new understanding. One of the ways by the way I like to view it is you have a spiritual antenna that picks up God. That's a grace gift.

If you don't have that antenna I don't care what else you've got you're not going to get it. And it's a grace gift to get that antenna. Think about life.

Once you're saved you begin to understand what life is about. And life is about dying to self. Life is about self-denial.

Life is about walking the crucified life. Now who's going to do that naturally in their flesh? Who's going to grasp that on their own? That's a divine gift. It's revelation that's divinely imparted.

Think about death. We understand death as a child of God. As we grow in the word that death is no longer a cruel task master that lords over us waiting to threaten us.

Death stinger has been removed. You know they say you can take a bee and you remove the stinger and they won't have another one. And the Bible says the sting of death has been removed in Christ and God through Christ has transformed death from this fearful thing to a kind messenger that takes us to a better home.

An understanding that God gives us. What about man? We don't view man as a pretty good guy and he just needs some help and he needs Jesus. We understand man as a deplorable and wretched sinner dead in trespasses and sins.

Lost and undone with a heart that's desperately wicked beyond all else and deceitful beyond all things and no one can understand it. But that man can be saved through the saving work of Jesus Christ. Righteousness.

Before we're saved, righteousness is some sort of man-centered works mentality. I'll try to do enough things and try to do the right things and I'll try to be right before God. And then we understand there's only one level of righteousness that God will receive and that's the standard of His Son's righteousness.

And that the only way we can be righteous is in Christ. Because God will only accept Him. But if we're in Him, we're accepted in Him.

Not our works, but it's Christ. All these things start becoming understandable to us. Sin, heaven, hell, eternity, etc.

We could go on and on. These things are divine gift. That's why I think Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice.

All you have to do is be a faithful preacher of the Word of God and those that God's given the gift to see and hear will be drawn to that preaching. Those that have not been given the gift to understand and see will be repelled by that preaching. And in that process of God drawing some and God repelling others, Jesus builds His church.

Jesus said, upon this rock I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. Well insight is a word He uses here as a part of this new understanding that is a part of a grace gift. He talks about insight, the last part of verse 8, which He lavished on us in all wisdom and insight.

The best understanding of the word insight means the practical application are living out of the wisdom that you're understanding. God begins to give you the shoe leather to put to the wisdom of your understanding. Then you go to verse 9 and He talks about the mystery of His will.

He's made known to us the mystery of His will. What is His will? You always have to think in terms of the historical context. In the historical context, these Gentiles had always heard the Jews saying, we are the people of God.

We are the descendants of Abraham. We're the blood lineage of Abraham, so we're God's chosen people. But listen, there was a mystery they didn't see.

The mystery was that God is sending His Messiah, His Savior, His own Son, Jesus Christ, and that through Jesus Christ, Jews and Gentiles all equally can come to the Father. It was a mystery that you would come to God through Jesus Christ and faith in Christ alone would save you. And Jews and Gentiles are on equal standing.

Now listen, this mystery of His will, that being His will, that all men can come to God through Christ, that mystery was not mysterious because it was incomprehensible, but because it was undiscoverable by human reason. In other words, you can get all the degrees you want. You can go to all the schools you

want to go through.

You can get a doctorate degree in every field of study. You can get every microscope and every telescope and every scientific experiment you can possibly find and you will never discover these things. It's divinely revealed.

It's a divine revelation of God to those who are the objects of His saving grace. Well, it's all grace. Are you getting that? Is Paul's message coming through? It's all grace.

It's all a wonderful gift. God's bestowed on those who are His. No wonder He calls it the riches of grace in verse 7. No wonder He says He lavished grace on us in verse 8. Are you beginning to see why Paul uses those descriptive phrases? Not only do you have redemption through grace, not only do you have the forgiveness of trespasses through grace, you've got the grace of new understanding of the ways of God.

And we're growing in that. Amen? Hopefully this year you understand more about how God does things and what He's about than you understood last year. I know I do.

And this is a grace gift. Number four, and we'll be much more brief on these, grace is unmerited. Now I know that sounds redundant.

If it's grace, it's unmerited. Unmerited is grace. But Paul brings this out and because both in Paul's day and in our day, there are those who preach grace but add works to it.

And those are, those are the antithesis one of the other. You can't add works and call it grace. You can't.

You rob grace of grace. And listen to me again, church. If you add works or some merit on your part to the equation of conversion, you are robbing God of the glory He desires to get for Himself by saving wretched sinners completely by grace.

Because listen, salvation is not first and foremost about you and about man. It is first and foremost about God and His glory. And once again, He gets great glory when He saves unworthy sinners like you and I, because in saving us, He exhibits an aspect of His nature that God and God alone possesses.

That is grace. And as I said before, I surmise that had God not wanted to glorify Himself by exhibiting an attribute only God possesses, that is grace, you and I would probably never have been saved. Because the end of it all is the glory of God, not the good of man.

However, God is moved for the good of man, but not to the extent that He is moved for His own glory. And the Bible text makes that very clear. For example, Ephesians chapter 1 three times says, to the praise of His glory, to the praise of His glory, to the praise of His glory.

Well, grace is unmerited. Look at verse 9. He wants to make this very clear. In verse 9, the last half, we'll just read it all.

He made known to us the mystery of His will according to His kind intention. Why did He do all of this? Or rather, let's say, on what basis did He do all this? Because of His choice. Why did He do it the way He did it? And why did He foreknow us before the foundation of the world and predestine us before the foundation of the world and call us in time and space history? And upon calling us, He sends the regenerating work of the third person of the Godhead, the Holy Spirit, and that that births faith and repentance in our hearts and we are justified before Holy God and glorified in that moment.

Why does He do it this way? He chose to. The kind intention of His will. Period.

Which magnifies what? It's unmerited. We had no role in it whatsoever. And Paul repeats this again, the last half of verse 11, who works all things after the counsel of His will.

Now, child of God, listen to your pastor. Die to your pride and die to your self-consumed thinking. Man will have no glory in this process.

Man was not brought into the council room of Almighty God and man was not allowed to discuss or debate with God or commune with God about how this process would be handled. God works all things after the counsel of His will. God does it all.

It's unmerited. We have no role and no part except to experience His grace and walk in His grace and truth and therefore exhibit through our lives as depraved unworthy sinners the glorious forgiveness, redemption and salvation that He's bestowed on us. Well, blessed are the balanced.

Well, pastor, if that's true, are we supposed to witness? Come on. It's in five books of the New Testament. Well, why do we keep witnessing that this is true? Because our Lord told us to witness.

Period. Period. And a half ounce of spiritual maturity should propel you in your evangelism to know these truths, not limit you in it.

Well, salvation is all of God. It's unmerited. Salvation is not by chance.

I deplore the notion that says God sort of rolled the dice when His Son hung on the cross and we'll just kind of see how good a job we can do and get as many people saved as we can. Come on. God didn't just roll the dice and there's just a chance out there.

No, it's not by chance and it's not by our choice. It's by His choice. He works all things after the counsel of His will.

That's Paul's clear, indisputably, explicitly clear message. Just real quickly look at Ephesians chapter 2 and look at verses 8 and 9. For by grace you've been saved through faith. Paul, we already understand this.

Can't you get off of it? He said, no, you've got to hear it again. For by grace you've been saved through faith and that not of yourselves. Don't you just love Paul? Of course he's writing under inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

He's writing exactly what God the Holy Spirit is telling him to write. But Paul says, here it comes one more time. You didn't save yourself.

God did it. It's the gift of God. Then he amplifies it even more.

Not as result of works so that no one may boast. Now if you have a problem, that's your problem. I want to say that clearly.

I want to say it again. If you have a problem with these doctrines, that is your problem. The flesh loves to boast.

The flesh wants just a little credit. Give me just a little merit pastor. Give me just a little responsibility.

I want to claim that I did something that seals and secures the deal. But could Paul be more explicit and emphatic to strip that kind of thinking away? But listen to me. We must not base the security of our salvation on what we have done, but trust that we are secure in Him as we see the evidences in our lives of what He has done.

Well pastor, what do we look for? Repentance toward God and faith in Jesus Christ. Do you think you could have done that? The very fact that you are real enough and honest enough to admit your wretched, miserable, lost, damned, doomed condition and place your faith in Jesus and receive the affirmation and the cleansing and the joy and the release and the excitement of that forgiveness and that cleansing and then to walk a new lifestyle where you start enjoying the word of God, where you start enjoying Christian people, where sin bothers you like it didn't bother you before. All these marks and evidences are things you're doing, but it's evidence of what He's done.

And that affirms your salvation, but it's all affirmed because you are secure in Him. And I've told you before, one of my simple little prayers almost daily through my life is just sort of lift my heart toward heaven and say, Dear Lord, if you don't save me, I'm sunk. It's not when I was in the car that night driving back to Middle Tennessee State University.

It's not did I think right? Did I pray right? Did I word it right? Did I understand it right? I just know there was a transformation that happened and I began to trust in Jesus Christ and a love and a peace and a joy and a forgiveness came into my life and a love for Scripture and a love for Christians and a lessening desire for the world began to grow in my life. And therefore, I just say you did it. I believed in you, sir.

I repented of my past. Sure, that has to happen. But all that is evidence of the divine work of grace in my heart.

And I trust in you, not in what I did. Paul wants to make it clear this grace is unmerited. Hodge said this, God possesses an inexhaustible supply of unlimited love.

God possesses an inexhaustible supply of unmerited love. Now you listen to me. Yeah, but pastor, I've got to grab hold of something I did.

Well, see then that robs God of being able to manifest and show forth that He has an inexhaustible supply of unlimited love. He's that wonderful. Don't take any of the wonder away from Him.

Don't take any of the glory away from who He is and how He does what He does. Because that's what salvation is all about, His glory and our good, but always in that order. I think it's blasphemous to God to even suppose that we in some manner have merited God's salvation.

We haven't. It's grace, grace, grace, grace. Number five, the grace of inheritance.

We want much more than mention this. The grace of inheritance, look at it there in verse 11, the first part, talking on, elaborating and building on all the component aspects of this grace that's been lavished on us, he says in verse 11, also we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined, marked out beforehand according to His purpose. You know, that's interesting to me that, you know, you wonder how did Paul ever start thinking like this because it's taking me almost 25 years of Christian life just to deprogram the foolish man-centered theology that was poured into me.

And I'm having to just get in the Word, get in the Word, get in the Word and read dead men. Men, the best writers of those have been dead a long time. To get my thinking back God-centered and not man-centered because if I were writing this, I would say you have an inheritance because you chose to believe in Jesus Christ.

Now that's not untrue. It's just not the primary thing. Paul always takes us back to the primary thing and he says in verse 11, you have obtained an inheritance because you were predestined according to His purpose.

Once again, let's give God all the credit. Didn't Paul mess up your theology? Didn't Paul mess up your little God in the box, I got it figured out? He just sort of slays us at the feet of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, holy God. And we just say, wow.

Well, because of grace, we get in on all that God the Father has handed over to His Son. Well, what all has God the Father handed over to His Son? Everything. All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth, Jesus said.

All is under my authority in heaven and in earth. And we are joint heirs with Jesus Christ, so it's all given to us. Now the child of God, you know why these things were written in the Bible? Because in many generations, many of our forefathers of the faith and four sisters, if you will, four mothers, lost all in a worldly sense to name the name of Jesus Christ.

You know why the name Baptist stuck on our forefathers? Not because they got together and said, let's come up with a neat name. No, they didn't care about a name. That's silly nonsense of worrying about what the name is on the front.

Happened later. Our forefathers didn't care, but they weren't arguing about the name. They were wondering which one was going to be martyred next.

As they hid in homes and shared their food and ran for their lives from the Roman Catholic Church and obeying scripture, they were coming to saving faith in Jesus Christ. And after they were saved, they were baptized. So they were repudiating and refuting infant baptism in the Roman Catholic Church.

And so in mockery, in derision, to be shameful, the persecutors of our forefathers said, they're baptizers. Just a bunch of baptizers. I want you to know I honor that truth.

And that's a wonderful truth. You know what the Roman Church did to a lot of our forefathers? They say you like to go underwater and bring shame and dishonor on the Roman Church. They drowned them.

They weren't worthy of the cross. And in that setting, when they heard, in grace, I'm a joint heir with Christ, that meant something. That meant something.

Well, we have an inheritance in grace. The last one, grace objectives. Why would God save us this way? It be all of grace and do all these marvelous, almost incomprehensible, wonderful, amazing things to save us and do all these glorious things.

Well, let's give two objectives that Paul gives. It doesn't need mentioning again, but be the second objective, the foundational objective, the preeminent objective is the glory of God. The glory of God.

It's just been, it's just been, and many theologians and scholars and expositional preachers will say this, the first 14 or so verses of Ephesians chapter one may be the most glorious section of scripture in the whole Bible. And you come to the end of verse 12. First of all, in the first few verses, God talks about the sovereign work of the father.

As you get to the middle section, the sovereign work of the son in saving us, then the sovereign work of the Holy spirit in saving us. You come down to the last part of verse 11 and he said, he works it all after the counsel of his will to the end. Verse 12, that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of his glory.

Why did God do it all Paul and do it so wonderfully and do it all by grace? So that for all eternity, one of the magnificent attributes of God, grace would be shining out from us forever and ever and ever. And it will draw attention and point to the glorious wonders of our God and no handles Messiah. He says, and he shall reign forever and ever and ever.

Well, something about the riches of grace. The preceding message comes from the expository preaching ministry of senior pastor teacher, Dr. Jeff Knoblet. For more information or other materials that are available, contact Anchored in Truth Ministries at www.anchoredintruth.org or call us toll free at 1-800-565-PRAY.

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Then the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit in saving us. You come down to the last part of verse 11 and He said, He works it all after the counsel of His will to the end. Verse 12, that we who were the first to hope in Christ would be to the praise of His glory.

Why did God do it all, Paul, and do it so wonderfully and do it all by grace? So that for all eternity, one of the magnificent attributes of God, grace, would be shining out from us forever and ever and ever. It would draw attention and point to the glorious wonders of our God. And old Handel's Messiah, He says, and He shall reign forever and ever and ever.

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