

October 22, 2017

(Foreign to Familiar Series: Ephesians 1-3)

“The Presence of the Holy Spirit”, Ephesians 1:11-14

Paul, In Ephesians 1:3-14, clearly lists incredible blessings “in Christ”, and then gives us two markers to assure us that we are truly “in Christ”.

A. There are incredible blessings in Christ. (Ephesians 1:3-11)

1. **Heavenly blessings:** The spiritual world is a place of blessing where Jesus won ultimate victory over Satan, who may be still active in the world, but we need fear because of believers’ spiritual armor.
2. **Chosen:** If we are in Christ, God the Father chose us before we were born.
3. **Purity:** Our position is that we are blameless in God’s sight. Our experience is that God is moving us as believers toward purity and away from sin.
4. **Adoption:** Through God’s Son, each of us is adopted with the same status as Jesus. When the Father looks at us He sees Jesus.
5. **Family:** In Christ, we were not just adopted; we were adopted into a spiritual family.
6. **Redemption:** Christ as a human ransomed us from our sin, paid the price (his blood) to secure our release.
7. **Forgiveness:** Because Christ was human He could pay for our sin. Because He was divine, He could pay for everyone’s sins once and for all, bringing us into His family. In experience, when we continue in disobedience, we still need discipline, repentance, and forgiveness.
8. **Insight:** Through Christ, we have insight into God’s big-picture view of history with meaning, purpose, and hope because God plans to renew all things through Christ and place all things under His headship so that this world can be what it was meant to be.
9. **Purpose:** In Christ, we each are given gifts to play a role with meaning and purpose in building His Kingdom
10. **Release:** In Christ, in the future, we will be done with sin and the brokenness of this world so that we can experience complete freedom in the new creation as children of God.
11. **Inheritance:** In Christ, we have an inheritance (Eph. 1:11a). We are joint heirs with Christ’s victory, resurrection, authority and we will inherit His Kingdom.
12. **Providence:** In Christ, God is working for our good through and in ALL the events of our lives “according to the purpose of His will” (Eph. 1:11b). We are not alone.

B. Evidences that these blessing belong to us (Ephesians 1: 13,14)

1. **Belief:** Most of the blessings above we cannot perceive. Our own faith, where God helps us to turn our wills in trust to Him, assures us that we are “in Christ” (Eph.1:13). We may not have figured it all out, but we believe and commit our lives to the Gospel story of redemption and forgiveness through Jesus Christ.
2. **The Holy Spirit’s presence:** The Holy Spirit’s presence in our daily lives assures (seals) us that we are in Christ (Eph.1:13,14; Romans 8:9). Some experience the Spirit strongly; others of us need to pay attention, listen, and look for the activity of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Discussion Questions:

1. Which blessings listed by Paul in Eph. 1 are most important to you at this point of life?
2. What would it be like to live in light of these blessings (Phil.4:8) instead of the tyranny of our daily crises? Is it even possible?

3. Have you, or at what point did you turn your will to trust in God to become His child? And now, can you get past your doubts and failures to daily trust in Him to transform you?
4. How specifically has the Holy Spirit proven Himself in your life? In the past and present.
5. Are you convinced that you are truly “in Christ”? Does Ephesians 1 help you?