



# DAILY FAITH PRACTICES

## Sunday, July 10-16 (B) – Ephesians 1:3-14

Focus: *Be Blessed*

### word of life

**“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”** Ephesians 1:3 (NRSV)

Read Ephesians 1:3-14

Ephesians begins with a strong reminder of the spiritual blessings which we have received through Jesus Christ. Blessed be God who has chosen to bless us through the gift of Christ.

1. *What are ways you have been spiritually blessed by Jesus Christ?*
2. *When in your own life did you become more aware of these spiritual blessings?*

The author of Ephesians writes about God *choosing* us before the earth was formed “to be holy and blameless before him in love”. (Ephesians 1:4 NRSV) It can be daunting to hear of God’s choice for us, let us alone God’s decision about us being made before the foundation of the earth was created.

Take note how we do not choose God, but God chooses us. Being blessed is not about our grasping God or taking the initiative. Instead, God acts, and that makes all the difference in our lives.

3. *What does it mean for God to choose us?*
4. *How does it feel to hear God chose us before the foundation of the earth was formed?*
5. *What questions (if any) about this passage would you like to ask God?*

God chooses us to be adopted as God’s own children through Jesus Christ “according to the good pleasure of [God’s] will, to the praise of [God’s] glorious grace that God freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.” (Ephesians 1:5-6 NRSV) This whole concept of God making a choice to be active in our lives and adopting us is sheer grace. It is God’s will, and it is a decision which gives pleasure to God.

6. *How might your relationship with Christ give pleasure to God?*
7. *What are the implications of being adopted into God’s family and being one of God’s children?*

We are blessed in Christ beyond measure through forgiveness and the riches of the grace of God. This bountiful blessing can be overwhelming to us. Most certainly we do not deserve such blessing. We might even wonder why God chooses to be so generous. Again in Ephesians 1:9 we are reminded of the pleasure of God established through Jesus Christ.

In the midst of the mysterious ways of God, it is helpful to be reminded of God’s plan and purpose. God is not acting randomly. But rather, God envisions the fullness of time when we claim our inheritance in Christ and our hope is realized. It gives God pleasure to bless us and see our lives manifest blessing.

In response to God’s blessings, we live to praise and give glory to Christ. Because God first blessed us, we are destined to become a blessing and a song of praise. We are invited to live confident in the mark of God’s seal of our baptism and the promised Holy Spirit.

8. *What does it mean to claim the inheritance in Christ?*
9. *What keeps us from living out our destiny and reflecting God’s love in Christ?*

## **word among us**

On a busy day in the grocery store, the cashier quickly rang up the food items, gave a receipt to the customer with these words, “Be blessed!” Throughout the day, she repeated to each customer the same words, “Be blessed!”

1. *What does it mean to say to someone “be blessed”?*
2. *What (if anything) can you do to “be blessed”?*

The writer of Ephesians might take issue with such a phrasing. There is nothing we can do to *be blessed*. God chose to bless us from the beginning of time through Jesus Christ. We have already been blessed by God. Perhaps the store clerk was attempting to encourage her customers to claim the blessings already bestowed by God.

3. *Describe what it means to be blessed.*

In the beginning of time, God chose us to be adopted as God’s children through Jesus Christ. Some refer to this as a pre-destination or a pre-existent grace which precedes our birth, but this grace is inclusive in nature. The predestination to which the author of Ephesians refers is not a pre-ordaining of what *we* will do, but rather what *God* will do. God knew from the beginning that Christ would be an instrument of God’s grace to reach humanity.

4. *When (if ever) have you heard Christians discuss predestination?*
5. *What questions do you have about predestination?*

The writer of Ephesians is clear: It is God good will and pleasure to adopt humans as God’s own children. We are destined by God’s grace for love. God intends “to gather up all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” (Ephesians 1:10 NRSV) Humans are destined to praise God.

6. *How are we “wired” or “predestined” for praise and love?*
7. *How is this understanding of predestination inclusive in nature?*

## **faith practice in daily life**

### **Hear the word of God and share in the Lord’s Supper**

This Ephesians passage is a beautiful summary of the Christian faith. We are directed to God who has first acted on our behalf, long before we came into existence. Our baptism is a visible, tangible sign of that grace. Our lives and understanding of God is a process of catching up to God’s mighty deeds. We are recipients of grace from long ago, today, and in the future.

Hearing the word of God is a continuous discipline and practice. Some of what we hear is the mystery of God and beyond our comprehension. But that’s ok. We do not need to have clarity on all of God’s ways. Instead we are invited to trust in the ways God chooses to bless. Our lives are not our own. We are invited to be a song of praise.

8. *How is your life a song of praise?*
9. *What phrase from this Ephesians passage do you hope to remember?*

### **Prayer**

Blessed be God who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. We praise you for all you have done through Christ. Amen

### ***last word***

Each morning, offer a prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God.

*Daily Faith Practices*

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