

**THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS
OUR BLESSINGS IN CHRIST
EPHESIANS 1:3
JUNE 11, 2006**

MEMORY VERSE:

Ephesians 1:3, "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."

INTRODUCTION

In Paul's writings, he often followed his salutation with a prayer for the recipients of the letter. These prayers usually gave an indication of the problems or issues he was going to address in the body of the letter. While Paul did not confront any specific issues in this letter, he was writing to remind this group of believers concerning the supremacy of Christ and encourage them to nurture and maintain unity in the church. At this time Ephesus was an extremely wealthy city with much of its community life focused on the temple practices of worshipping the goddess Diana. A believer in Christ was excluded from the wealth and community life of the city. This letter from Paul must have been a great encouragement to the Ephesian believers as he reminded them of the eternal riches and blessings they have in Christ. Warren Wiersbe states, "Paul's letter to the Ephesians is as carefully structured as the great temple of Diana, and it contains greater beauty and wealth! We inherit the wealth by faith and invest the wealth by works. Without this balance, our spiritual riches do us no good."

The memory verse today is the overall theme of this study in Ephesians. To better help in our understanding concerning the meaning of this verse refer to the following definitions:

- "every spiritual blessing" - refers to the blessings of the Holy Spirit. The blessings we receive are spiritual in nature and have eternal value. Spiritual refers to the source, not the extent of the blessing. Because we have an intimate relationship with Christ, we can enjoy these blessings now.***
- "in heavenly places" - this phrase does not refer to a physical location but to a spiritual reality. The "heavenly places" means the blessings from Christ are eternal and not temporal. They encompass the entire domain and supernatural realm of God.***

- ***“blessed”*** - When referring to God, ***“blessed”*** is used to reflect a message of praise and commendation. God is good and deserves our supreme praise. In reference to man, it means to benefit and prosper.

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

1. ***Read verse 3 several times and rewrite it in your own words. What is the significance of the word “blessed” as it is used in this verse?***
2. ***In the original Greek, verses 3-14 of this first chapter in Ephesians comprised one long sentence. Read verses 4-14 and list the spiritual blessings that Paul is referring to in verse 3. When you list these blessings, personalize them by writing “me” instead of “us.” How does this list encourage you?***
3. ***Paul talks about “blessings in the heavenly places” in verse 3. Other references to “heavenly places” in this letter can be found in 1:20, 2:6, 3:10 and 6:12. What is the significance of this phrase?***
4. ***According to 2 Peter 1:3-4, how should these “spiritual blessings” impact how you live your life today?***

OUR WALK WITH GOD

1. ***As we noted earlier, the word “blessed” means to praise and commend God for who He is and the goodness He extends to us. How often do you praise God when you pray? Why should praise be an integral part of your prayer life?***
2. ***Read Colossians 3:1-2. What does it mean to set your heart and mind on the things above? If you truly made this a priority, how might this change the way you live your life on a daily basis?***

GOING DEEPER

Read Luke 1:46-55 and Luke 1:67-79. What stands out to you in these two prayers of praise and blessing? After reading these two prayers, take time to write you own personal prayer of praise and blessing to the Lord.