

FREE AND FORGIVEN

1/10/99

Eph. 1:7-12

An old cartoon shows a pompous lawyer reading a client's will to a group of anxious, greedy relatives: "I, John Jones, being of sound mind and body, *spent it all!*"

In Ephesians 1, Paul is telling us in brief summary form, all the benefits that Christ left us when He died on the cross on our behalf.

He didn't spend it all!

He left us everything we need! We lack nothing!

In Him we have received *every spiritual blessing!*

Paul writes to church at Ephesus and surrounding cities from jail in Rome. He heard church is divided — over issues arising from 2 cultures making up the church — Jew vs Gentile.

Paul begins with **Hymn of Praise** because **God has broken down the old barriers and made us all one in Christ!**

God has accepted all of us, without distinction.

Therefore, we ought to accept one another.

The first half of the letter is doctrinal.

There's something God wants us TO KNOW!

He wants us to KNOW what a "GREAT JOB" God has done in us.

God has made us into ONE PEOPLE — His church — in Christ.

PAUL'S PRAYER OF PRAISE FOR GOD'S PEOPLE 1:3-3:20

Paul's gives praise to God because of His plan for His people in the present age.

PAUL'S PRAISE FOR GOD'S PLAN 1:3-14

Passage is hard to lay out systematically; in his enthusiasm to praise God for all He's done for us, one great thought presses in on another.

[I face a similar frustration when I speak on one of the great themes of Scripture. Someone will always point out some aspect I neglect to mention. In my enthusiasm to focus on one aspect, I can't always say *everything* that needs to be said!]

Praise for His marvelous plan that has made it possible for us to receive every spiritual blessing

Ultimate purpose of God's plan: that He might receive glory

PRAISE FOR THE WORK OF THE FATHER 1:3-6

After the initial burst of praise for every spiritual blessing, He celebrates God's *past* election.

Paul is specifically grateful because God chose us before the foundation of the world.

He chose us that we might be holy and blameless before Him.

He chose us to be adopted as His children.

He chose us because He loves us.

He chose us so that He might receive glory through us.

[After talking about what God the Father has done for us, He moves on to tell us what God has done through His Son, Jesus.

After celebrating God's election *past*, he switches to celebrate God's *present* redemption in Christ.]

PRAISE FOR GOD'S WORK THROUGH HIS SON 1:7-12 IN HIM--

God has given us 3 things through His Son:

- 1. God has provided redemption through His Son** 7a *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace*

REDEMPTION

There were 60 million slaves in the Roman empire in Paul's day.

They were bought and sold like pieces of furniture!

Four biblical words drawn from the marketplace—from the slave trade:

They are big words and I won't try to impress you (or bore you!) by telling you the words.

1. Simple word to "buy" something. You go s-h-o-p-p-i-n-g. You buy something.

Difference between men and women: men go shopping; women go s-h-o-p-p-i-n-g.

Research has shown that shopping is more hazardous to men's health!

2. [Compound based on 1st:] => "to buy out of" the market.

It looks at the affect of the purchase on the object.

It has been taken away from the market place.

A slave is no longer for sale. He's been bought so he's "off the market."

3. Specifically of a slave: to buy his freedom.

It includes the paying of a price; but it emphasizes liberty.

He is free!

4. The word commonly used for our redemption in the N.T.

It goes beyond all the others.

apolutrosis—action of liberating permanently—didn't return to slavery

Young slave for sale. Fierce competition between a cruel slave driver and a kind master.

After the kind old master outbid the cruel slave driver, he turned and walked away. The young slave followed. When the old man turned around, he explained, "I bought you to give you your freedom—you may go now." The slave responded you mean I am truly FREE? After his question was answered he fell down before the kind old master: 'then it will be my greatest joy to serve you the rest of my life!'

A small boy lived on the shore of a large lake. He loved the water and sailing so much that he decided to make a model boat. He spent months investing every spare moment in that boat. It was beautiful. One day a sudden gust of wind caught the small boat and carried it out beyond his reach, and out of sight. The boy returned home weeping; but it was too late. His boat was gone. Day after day he walked the shore in hopes of finding

his treasured boat, but always in vain. Then one day as he was walking through town he spotted it in a store window. He went in to tell the store owner that it was his boat. He discovered that the owner had bought the boat; the only way to get it back was to buy it from him. The boy went to work doing every kind of chore he could think of, until eventually he had enough to buy back his boat. As he walked out of the store he said with great joy: "You are twice mine now—because I made you, and now I have bought you."

That's what Christ has done for us.

1 Pet. 1:18-19 "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

We are "*twice His*," having been created by Him, and then redeemed by His blood.

God has redeemed us through His Son.

He has bought us.

He has taken us away from the slave market.

He has freed us from our slavery to sin.

He has given us our freedom *permanently*!

2. God has provided forgiveness of sin through His Son 7b 7-10 *In him we have redemption through his blood, **the forgiveness of sins**, in accordance with the riches of God's grace 8 that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding. 9 And he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, 10 to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ.*

God's forgiveness is a free gift.

It is NOT based on our works—not by works; but by grace.

GRACE—given by God—not based on merit nor works

God's forgiveness is *according to* the riches of His grace, which He has *lavished* upon us!

Some people give from their riches (e.g., Rockefeller gave from his wealth—a dime to a poor waif; or a dollar to a beggar.) What if he had given according to his riches? [years ago one of my favorite TV series: The Millionaire—who anonymously made other people into millionaires—just because he wanted to give to them?]

God has given to us according to His riches of grace! — amply pouring out His forgiveness.

God is not stingy about pouring out His grace on His people!

He pours it out *lavishly*!

He gives from His unlimited treasure house of grace—what we could never deserve or pay for!

Annie Johnson Flint: "His love has no limit; His grace has no measure; His power has no

boundary known unto men. For **out of His infinite riches** in Jesus, He giveth, and giveth, and giveth again!" That's how he forgives also!

This was a mystery to the Jewish people reading the O.T.

They didn't get it!

They couldn't see it!

They thought they were the *only* ones God loved.

But now at the end of time – God's full purpose has been revealed.

We have all been brought together under one Head=>Jesus!

God's grace is rich enough to pay for ALL of us, so that we ALL might be forgiven by His grace.

That was His plan from the beginning – now it's been fulfilled through His Son.

We *HAVE* forgiveness of sin – God has provided forgiveness in His Son.

3. God chose us to be His inheritance *11 In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, 12 in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory.*

NIV=> **11** *In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan ...*

"Chosen" has within it the idea of an inheritance

NAS & KJV=>"we have obtained an inheritance"

Old ASV (& Amplified) =>"we also were made God's heritage"

NLT=>(alt trans.)=>"**we have become God's inheritance**"

Two possible ideas: [In reality *both* are true!]

1) God chose us to receive an inheritance from Him

2) God chose us to be HIS inheritance; We ARE the inheritance

Cp. O.T. Israel was God's inheritance –

Deut. 32:9 "For the Lord's portion is His people, Jacob [is] His allotted inheritance."

Zech. 2:12 "The Lord will inherit Judah as His portion in the holy land ..."

*Eph. 1:14 "[The Holy Spirit] is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of **those who are God's possession** ..."*

God's people is His inheritance – now WE are it!

God has chosen *us* as His inheritance

"... having predestined us ..."

"... according to the plan of Him Who works everything out according to the purpose of His will."

He chose us to be His inheritance – NOT because we somehow deserve it, but because He has chosen us – it fits HIS plan!

If God has done so much for us, how should we respond to His grace?

1. Praise HIM! He alone deserves praise!

Praise the Savior, ye who know Him!

Who can tell how much we owe Him?

∴, Gladly let us render to Him All we are and have.

2. Don't brag! No room to boast

3. Live on the basis of what God has done. Act like its true!

Man asked Alexander the Great to give him a huge sum of money in exchange for his daughter's hand in marriage. The ruler agreed and told him to ask his treasurer for whatever he wanted. He went and asked for a huge sum. Going to Alexander, the treasurer argued that a fraction of the amount would be more than enough. "No," replied Alexander, "let him have it. I like that fellow. He does me honor. He treats me like a king and proves by what he asks that he believes me to be both rich and generous.

Paul has made clear in this hymn of praise that he believes God is both rich and generous. Do we?

=> Redeemed, How I Love to Proclaim It!