

Open the Eyes of My Heart (Part 3)

Ephesians 1:3-14

Pastor Edward Cheng

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In the second part of Ephesians, Paul talks about all the ways our lives should be transformed, about how relationships between husband and wife, parents and children, and employer and employee should be different for Christians. This change is not brought about by threats or guilt, but rather it is in response to all that God has done for you. Do you understand all that God has done for you? Do you understand how good you have it? God is a God who wants to bless us. Psalm 25:6 says that His mercy and love are from of old. They are at His core. This is the reason we are changed.

In Ephesians 1, Paul discusses no less than 11 ways in which God has been good to us. Last time we learned that He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing (v. 3). God chose us, not out of our own merit, but out of His love and grace (v. 4). He adopted us fully (v. 5). He showers us with grace that we do not deserve (v. 6). He redeemed and delivered us from the oppression of sin and death (v. 7), just as Israel was delivered from slavery in Egypt. Our bondage to sin, however, is so much stronger that we need someone so much greater than Moses to deliver us, that is Jesus Christ. God gave us forgiveness of sins (v. 7). Next, God lavishes His gifts upon us (v. 8). He gives us more than we need. He indulges us. Ephesians 3:20 says that He is able to do “immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine.” He knows our needs more than we do. Can you understand the depth of His grace? In vv. 8-9 Paul tells us that God gave us all wisdom and understanding, making known the mystery of His will, which Paul will elaborate on in chapter 3. God reveals to us what is hidden. How good it is for us to know what is hidden to unbelievers, that death is not the end, that through Jesus we have eternal life.

Moving on to v. 11, Paul says “we” were chosen by God. This “chosen” is a different word than in v. 4, which is the kind of choice one makes when picking out fruit at the supermarket. Here the word “chosen” means chosen to be His inheritance. And the “we” refers to Jews, those who were first, those who are God’s portion, His prize, His inheritance (Deuteronomy 32:8-9). Remember that the gospel was preached to Jews first, then Gentiles, and in the early days of the church Gentiles were a minority. Israel is God’s nation, and He still loves them and has a plan for them. He remains faithful to Israel and will restore the faithful remnant. In the present Israel has not accepted Jesus, but they will one day. But in the meantime, we

Gentiles are also included (v. 13). We were on the outside looking in, but we were welcomed just as God's people are. It's like when Cindy and I were invited to a family's home at Berkeley, and they treated us just as one of them, though we were not. God allows us to be a part of His family because He is so gracious that He can't help but let us in.

Next in vv. 13-14 Paul says we were marked with a seal, the Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance. The Holy Spirit is like an engagement ring, which guarantees that the man will go through with His promise to marry the woman. The Spirit guarantees Jesus will return and fix everything. It's like when someone gives a down payment on a house, which guarantees the seller that they will pay the rest. This down payment is in exchange for the house, but God's deposit of the Holy Spirit is in exchange for nothing. It is one-sided. We didn't give God anything, but He gave us this inheritance, and this deposit. Why bother giving us a deposit? To many people, it sounds a little ridiculous that Jesus will come back from heaven with angels. And we've been waiting a while and He hasn't returned. Meanwhile we live our lives as aliens in this corrupt world, where it is all too easy to lose hope. So God gives us the Spirit so that we may persevere in faith. And there can be no doubt when we see the Holy Spirit working in our lives and among us.

Finally look at vv. 3 and 6, 6 and 12, and then 13 and 14. Each person of the Trinity has blessed us to the praise of His glory. All three persons are involved in blessing us. God is fully committed to blessing us. Do you understand just how good He is to you?