



It's in Christ Ephesians 1v7-14

Story about Bill Gates at the airport—what makes a person rich? How wealthy, in non-financial terms, do we feel ourselves to be? Ephesians talks a lot about grace. God's grace is both his abundant kindness and the gift to us which results from that (in English, too, the word "kindness" can mean both the attitude and the thing given). God wants us to know that the gift he has already given to us is massive.

1) Placed in Christ (1v7-10)

God has placed us "in Christ," connected us to him and placed us in relationship with him. That means we're already in Jesus' realm. This is what God wants and he has done it in delight (v5). Paul tells us more about what God's will is working towards in v9-10. It's a will that was hidden (a "mystery") but has now been revealed—at the end of the age, to bring everything together in Christ, so bringing everything into freedom and life and shalom (peace), with Christ Jesus at the centre (v10). It's cosmic!

If we're trusting Jesus, then we're already included in that because we've been placed in Christ. We already have redemption/ freedom from guilt, through the power of the death of Christ for us (v7). We stand in a rich, lavish grace (v8, Rom 5v3), not just at conversion or now, but always. *What does this mean for the way God views the sin that happens after our conversion? Can anything threaten the constancy of God's relationship with you?*

2) Inheritors in Christ (1v11-14)

In Christ we already have redemption and, in Christ, we already have "obtained an inheritance" (v11, ESV). That's got to mean you're very rich today if you've put your life in Christ's hands, trusting him, because he holds everything. He inherits everything and shares it with you! And this gift, this grace of God in individual lives, displays his dazzling kindness and love (v12).

He delights to do this. And v13 tells us how his predestining will is worked out in individual lives: you hear the truth, the gospel of salvation & freedom, believe in Christ and are placed in Him; and as that happens you are sealed in Christ with the promised Holy Spirit (v13). A seal made an impression that, e.g., marked a letter as authentic and belonging to the sender whose seal was used. God has put his seal on you, marking you as belonging to him and being from him. And v14 says this gift of the Holy Spirit is the down-payment (the "deposit guaranteeing") the full inheritance.

We are rich and cannot lose. The Lord encourages us to enjoy that richness (Spurgeon's 1890 sermon on Christians "possessing our possessions"). You can be as confident in the presence of God as if he chose you for eternity...because he has! You can be as free from guilt in the presence of God as if you were already in heaven...because you're raised there (2v6)! You can be as sure of God's desire to bless you as if he adopted you permanently and made you a beneficiary of every joy and freedom of Christ's kingdom...because he has done just that!

How is God drawing you to enter more fully into enjoyment of these possessions of yours at the moment?

