



It's For You! Ephesians 1v1-6

What's your idea of church? What's essential? We need to hear from God to answer that sort of question. Ephesians was written by the Apostle Paul about 30 years after the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus. Here we have a real letter, from an Apostle of Christ, whose words come with the authority of the Lord. It's written to "God's holy people", to people set apart by God and for God, through personal trust (faith) in Christ Jesus (v1). As God addresses us as his church, his word and heart to us is "Grace and peace" (v2).

1) The Glory of His Gift (1v3, v6)

What are the challenges and blessings of having our "props" taken away during Covid?

If you're trusting Jesus as Lord, God has already "blessed [you] in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing" (v3), and he has done that through Christ. If you're trusting Jesus for life, on the final day, there will be no spiritual blessing that he has withheld from you. "Spiritual" here means having to do with the things of God (or "in the realm of the Spirit"). That means God is unreservedly FOR you and, at the end of the day, will be shown to have given you every possible blessing. That's his heart towards you. He's the God who blesses and gives to you constantly. With Paul, we say, "Bless you Father" (v3). In v6, Paul says that on the last day we will therefore be praising "the glory of his grace which he has freely given us." That word "grace" can mean both the kindness behind the gift and the gift itself. When we look back from the end, the overwhelming thing will be the radiance and beauty of his kindness towards us in Jesus.

How do these verses show that there is no such thing as a second-rate Christian in terms of God's attitude and heart towards them? Why does this mean that, if we're trusting Jesus personally, it's not possible to have "blown it" with him? Thank him for these deep blessings.

2) The Delight of His Will (1v4-5)

Imagine someone giving just the gift you need and want at Christmas, and in delight saying, "It's For You!" God has handed us the perfect gift, which never wears out and does exactly what it says on the box! It's what we most need and what we desire at the deepest level. He's done it out of lavish and extravagant kindness (he's done it out of his grace, v6).

Let's unwrap the gift. He chose us in Christ before the creation of the world... "to be holy and blameless in his sight" (to be made like Jesus!), v4. This was God's choice and "in accordance with his pleasure/ delight" (v5). And so, he never changes his mind on this and will never change his love—it's from eternity, to eternity (v14). It depends on him and his choice/ will, not on us. This gift of love adopts us as sons into his family. God wants us in his family, has already placed us there and delights to bring us safely home. Praise him!

How do these wonderful truths change how we think about God's heart towards us and calm our fears?

