

Richer Than You Think

January 10/11, 2009

Q. How rich do you feel?

Proverbs 23:7 - As a man thinks in his heart, so is he.

It took a prisoner writing 2000 years ago to remind us that in Christ we are richer than we think!

Historical Background: Ephesians 1:1-2 - This letter is from Paul, chosen by the will of God to be an apostle of Christ Jesus. I am writing to God's holy people in Ephesus, who are faithful followers of Christ Jesus. May God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ give you grace and peace.

Who, when and where: The apostle Paul wrote this letter to the churches in Asia Minor, modern day Turkey, from prison, in Rome, around 60 to 65 AD. Paul visited Ephesus during his second missionary tour. He lived there for three years on his third tour and had a huge impact there (Acts 19-20). Next to Jerusalem and Antioch, Ephesus proved to be a very powerful springboard for influencing the known world for Christ.

Key Faith and Action Points:

1) Ephesians 1:3-11 - All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son.

We were chosen and adopted to be blessed and we are already blessed with every spiritual blessing we need to live the life Christ wants us to live. We simply need to believe in what we have received and cash in on it!

2) Ephesians 1:12-14 - God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. The Spirit is God's

guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.

The Holy Spirit in us is the guarantee we will receive all of our promised inheritance in Christ. We have in us the proof that God will give us all we need when we need it.

3) Ephesians 1:15-23 - Ever since I first heard of your strong faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for God's people everywhere, I have not stopped hanking God for you. I pray for you constantly, asking God, the glorious Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, to give you spiritual wisdom and insight so that you might grow in your knowledge of God. I pray that your hearts will be flooded with light so that you can understand the confident hope he has given to those he called—his holy people who are his rich and glorious inheritance. I also pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe him. This is the same mighty power that raised Christ from the dead and seated him in the place of honor at God's right hand in the heavenly realms. Now he is far above any ruler or authority or power or leader or anything else—not only in this world but also in the world to come. God has put all things under the authority of Christ and has made him head over all things for the benefit of the church. And the church is his body; it is made full and complete by Christ, who fills all things everywhere with himself.

Praying for the right things is how our lives are filled with the things we need and what Christ wants to fill us with. What we really need is fully available to us out of the fullness of Christ.

Discussion Questions:

- 1. How rich do you see yourself to be? Do you see yourself blessed already with every spiritual blessing in Christ?**
- 2. Have you thought of God's promises as your eternal checking account? What promises do you need to cash in on more in your life?**
- 3. How well do you know the Holy Spirit? Do you experience His guidance and comfort personally?**
- 4. Do you pray God's Word over your life and for others? Take time to pray Ephesians 1:15-23 together.**