

Good morning family!

I say family because that is the way the Bible describes our relationship when we are in Christ, and I believe it.

We are family despite the geographical distance that separates us.

Let me introduce myself and the team that is with me today.

I am Pastor Jose Machado, and I am accompanied by my wife Adriana, my daughter Eliana whom some of you may know, and my youngest daughter Melisa.

I have another daughter; her name is Raquel, and she is married to Roy but they stayed in Mexico.

I am also accompanied by Pastor David Rembao and his wife Valeria.

Saul Marquez who is the leader of the youth group, his wife Lizeth and his sons Saul and Aaron.

It is a great blessing for us to be here today, and I want to tell you briefly about our church.

We come from the city of Hermosillo in the state of Sonora.

We live in the northern part of Mexico, very close to the border with the United States.

There I have been Pastor of the Horizonte church since 2005.

Like you in Abide, we are part of the Calvary Chapel family, and I want you to know that we are praying for you, that God will continue to work in your lives and through your lives.

And also, to let you know that the whole church sends you greetings from Hermosillo.

If you ever visit Mexico, you have a home there.

Today I want to briefly share a passage of Scripture found in the letter to the Ephesians.

I know you have already studied this letter verse by verse in 2019.

However, I want us to focus on just three blessings found in chapter 1.

Turn with me in your Bibles to [Ephesians Chapter 1, verses 3 through 7](#), it reads like this:

[Eph 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ,](#)

[Eph 1:4 as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him,](#)

[Eph 1:5 in love, having predestinated us to adoption as his children through Jesus Christ, according to the pure affection of his will,](#)

Eph 1:6 to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherewith he hath made us accepted in the Beloved,

Eph 1:7 in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace,

Some of you may remember that in this chapter 1, Paul is praising God for all the blessings received "In Christ".

The whole chapter is one long prayer of praise and thanksgiving to God, for his glorious plan of salvation.

However, I will take only three of the blessings mentioned.

23) These blessings are:

1.- You are chosen by God

2.- You are part of God's family

3.- You are forgiven by God

Paul mentions in verse 4 the first blessing that all believers participate in: God has chosen us.

This means that God took the initiative to restore the relationship that was broken as a consequence of sin.

As we can see, salvation has no human origin, it comes entirely from God.

But what is the purpose for which he chose us?

In the second part of verse 4, we are told that the purpose is for us to be holy and blameless before Him.

This is no small thing, it means that God chose us in spite of our weaknesses, faults and sins, to transform us into a holy people, set apart for Him.

However, God did not do this for some selfish motive, God did this motivated by love.

Now I invite you to think together about the implications of this blessing because they are really important.

We all struggle to be recognized, there is something in us that drives us to continually seek recognition.

We all want to be loved, accepted, and valued. And that is why we often live our lives trying to gain the acceptance of others.

However, in this passage the Bible shows us that God, the creator, and sustainer of the Universe, chose us in Christ.

Not because of our performance, not because of our merits, not because of our qualities, but because he loved us.

All merit is God's, all praise is for God!

But, also I want you to see something, he has chosen us and has also given us a purpose; that we should be holy.

Therefore, God is working in our lives to make us more and more like Jesus.

In fact, He is going to use every situation in our life for that purpose, even those that we don't understand or find painful.

That's what it says in [Romans 8:28-29](#)

Rom 8:28 And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.

Rom 8:29 For whom he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Those who love God are those who have believed in Jesus, those who love God are those who have put our Faith in Him.

And Paul tells us that God uses every situation in our lives to make us like Jesus. That is, to make our character more and more like Jesus.

This is a lifelong process and will be completed when we come into His presence to be with Him.

The second blessing we see in this portion is in verse 5, Paul tells us that God not only chose us, but also adopted us as His children.

God destined us out of love to be His children. He wanted to "adopt" us, to make us sons and daughters of his family.

This is an immense privilege, the almighty God is now our Father, and we are now part of his family made up of people from all over the world.

It doesn't matter if you are Japanese, Mexican, or American, in Christ all of us who believe in Jesus are part of the same family, and we have the same Father.

If you look closely, this verse implies that God chose His people to have a relationship with Him, and He did it out of love.

Sometimes, people think that God is oblivious to our situations, that He is not interested in our affairs.

However, the image we see here contradicts that idea.

God is a loving and relational God, who seeks to have a real and dynamic relationship with his children.

Let us pause again to reflect on the implications of this.

Many people today, for some reason, live in conflict with their blood family.

Maybe because their parents have been very demanding, maybe because of a conflict between siblings, or for any other reason.

The point is that they do not feel loved, nor do they feel part of the family.

Perhaps expectations have been too high, and they feel they have fallen short.

However, the almighty God, is also a loving Father, who has not only chosen us, but also adopted us because He loves us.

Remember this, God accepts us as we are, but He loves us so much that He will not leave us as we are.

He is going to transform us through his Holy Spirit so that we will be holy.

One of the things that has surprised me when I have seen God's love. His love is not like ours.

God's love does not change. This means that He loves us perfectly.

He doesn't love us more when we do the things that please Him, nor does He love us less when we fail.

He always loves us perfectly!

When Paul wrote this letter to the believers in the church at Ephesus, he wanted them to see that God is a relational God.

That he chose them and adopted them to have a real relationship and enjoy them as his family.

But also, for them to see that their destiny did not depend on the stars, spirits, magic or luck.

But that their future was assured and blessed because God chose them in Christ, and they had a real relationship with Him.

This is still true today.

Finally, I want to emphasize the blessing we have in verse 7.

Paul mentions two terms in this verse that are very important: Redemption and forgiveness.

The word redemption basically means to set free.

The idea expresses a person paying the ransom for the freedom of a slave.

In this sense Paul is telling the believers in Ephesus that God not only chose them and made them part of his family, but also set them free.

The question is, free from what?

In the same letter to the **Ephesians** in **chapter 2** Paul describes the condition of all people who have not believed in Jesus.

In verses **1 to 3** he says the following:

Eph 2:1 And you hath he quickened, who were dead in trespasses and sins,

Eph 2:2 in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now works in the sons of disobedience,

Eph 2:3 among whom also we all once lived in the lust of our flesh, doing the will of the flesh and of the thoughts, and were by nature children of wrath, even as others.

In this passage Paul shows that people without Jesus are not only spiritually dead (meaning they are separated from God).

But he also says that they are enslaved.

They are slaves of sin; they follow the world's way of thinking (not God's way of thinking).

They obey the prince of the power of the air (which is the devil) instead of God.

and do the will of the flesh (i.e. follow their own sinful desires).

People think they are free because they do as they please, but the Bible describes them as slaves living in sin without being able to obey God.

And Paul says that we were all living in that slavery without Christ.

But now Paul tells us that in Jesus we have redemption.

That is, we are finally free from sin, free from our desires and free from the power of the devil.

How did God do it? Through his Beloved Son who died for us on the cross.

You and I are free because Jesus by his death paid our ransom to God.

Not only are we free, but we are also forgiven.

That means that we are no longer guilty before God for our sins, therefore neither condemnation nor guilt has any place in our life.

Now, because of Jesus' death on the cross, we can have true freedom and true forgiveness.

So, let us review the three blessings we have mentioned:

The Almighty God, in Christ chose imperfect people like you and me to make them holy.

He adopted them to be part of his family, and to enjoy his relationship with them.

He forgave them and set them free and all this out of LOVE.

Do you know what this is called?

Grace!

The word Grace basically implies a gift. It is receiving that which we cannot buy or pay for.

Back in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 6 Paul says: "To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherewith he hath made us accepted in the Beloved."

That is, because of the love shown by God in choosing us and adopting us, the correct response is that we praise Him for His grace toward us.

And in verse 7 it says, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace."

What Paul is saying is that God is a generous God to give us things we do not deserve.

God has poured out "in Christ" this Grace abundantly to forgive the worst sinners for free.

What we see here is that no matter your past, no matter your present failures, no matter the size of your sins.

"In Christ" you are chosen, accepted, adopted, delivered, and forgiven.

And that, family, changes everything.

If you are not yet in Christ, this is a good day to recognize that like all men, you are in need.

In need of forgiveness, in need of a savior to give you eternal life and set you free from the power of sin.

Forgiveness, freedom, and eternal life are only in Jesus the Beloved Son of God.

Amen?

Amen!

Let's worship the Lord!

