

Blessed in Christ
Study 1 – Ephesians – Living In Christ and the World
Ephesians 1:1-14

Message Mate

- Do you want to know God’s grace and peace in these uncertain times? The early Christians used a Greek greeting of “grace” to express God’s favour towards someone, while those with a Jewish heritage were more familiar with the Hebrew word *shalom*, meaning peace and flourishing with the blessings of God. When a greeting of grace and peace was used it expressed unity between Gentile and Jewish believers. It also expresses that, “grace is an expression of the gospel, while peace is the effect of the gospel.”
- Ephesians was written as a circular letter giving a grand panorama of the gospel of Jesus, showing us how to live in Christ and in the world. It shows us how to live in a geographical place and in the reality of the spirit realm in Christ. Ephesians 1:3-14 is a long single sentence (202 words) in the form of a *berakah*, a Jewish synagogue style of blessing and this is reinforced in verse 3 which uses the word blessing/blessed three times (see the ESV, NASB or most other translations).
- Verses 3 to 6 reveals that we are blessed because ***God our Father shows us love and grace***. We are called to be holy (set apart from the world) and blameless (forgiven) so that we are a witness to the world and to make it more like the world that God intended it to be. God chooses individuals or groups of people to be recipients of His grace, and by His grace we are saved at His initiative. This is called election. In His love and grace, God has adopted us as His children.
- Verses 7 to 10 reveal that ***Jesus redeems us***. To redeem means to receive something because someone else has already paid for it. Jesus paid for our redemption from sin through the price of his life, shedding His blood and dying on the cross. God in His grace redeemed you for a purpose of bringing His unity to all things. As followers of Jesus, we are “in Christ” seated with Him in the heavenly realms (Ephesians 2:6) and at the same time we are called to be on earth as a witness of God’s presence, grace and peace to the world around us.
- Verses 11-14 shows us ***the Holy Spirit reveals God’s presence in us***. Assurance is a deep confidence that God’s love and grace towards you has saved you. You are assured that you are “in Christ” because God, the Holy Spirit is living in you.
- In this passage, we meet God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It focusses on praise at the start, middle and end. One aspect of living in Christ by God’s love, grace and peace, is praising even in uncertain times because in His grace He has chosen you, adopted you into His family, redeemed you from sin, and given you the Holy Spirit so that you may have His peace and reveal it to the world around you.

Some Questions to Consider

1. Consider the greeting, “grace and peace”. Why do you think it was so powerful in unifying Jewish and Gentile believers in the early church? Discuss the significance of the statement, “grace is an expression of the gospel, while peace is the effect of the gospel.”
2. Verse 2 now reads, “To God’s holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus”. Discuss the concept that we are to live in a geographical place here on earth while also living in the reality of the spirit realm, in Christ Jesus. How does that concept affect the way you see your purpose as a Christian where God has placed you at the moment?
3. Read Ephesians 1:4,5. Election means that God chooses individuals or groups of people to be recipients of His grace, and grace means that we don’t deserve it, nor can we earn it. God chooses us to be adopted as His children for His good purposes in creation. What do you see as His purpose in your life?
4. Jesus paid for your redemption through his blood (v 7) to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ (v 10). God is calling you to live on earth and in heaven so that you can bring Jesus into the world and to be a witness to those around us in the world. How do you feel you are going with being a witness of Jesus to those in the world around you?
5. Assurance is a deep confidence that God’s love and grace towards you has saved you. You are assured that you are “in Christ” because God, the Holy Spirit is living in you. How much do you want the Holy Spirit to be increasingly evident and powerful in your life?
6. Read Ephesians 1:3-14 noting how many times it says,
 - “in Christ”, “in Him” (or similar)
 - praise
 - glory
 - grace or gracious.

This passage is considered to be a blessing. As you read it, do you feel a sense of praise (or a desire to praise God) for all our glorious things God has done for you in Christ.?

Pray –

Praise God for all He has done for you through His grace expressed towards you.

Pray for a greater understanding of what it means to live on earth and in heaven so that you may fulfil God’s purposes for you and reveal God to those in the world around you.