



The God of Love

Christian First Principles #2

OPEN (5-10 minutes)

What is the most extravagant gift you have ever received or given?

DIG (20-25 minutes) **Read Ephesians 1:3-8**

1. Why does Paul open this letter to the older, established congregation in Ephesus by calling on them to praise God? He usually opens with a prayer of thanksgiving for the recipients?
2. Why does Paul specify spiritual blessings (v3)? What other kinds of blessings are there?
3. How could adopting sinners be in accordance with God's pleasure and will (v5)?
4. How can redeeming sinners be both a lavish gift and a wise investment (v7-8)?

REFLECT (25-30 minutes)

1. How often do you pray a prayer of thanksgiving? When you do give thanks to God, are you more likely to thank Him for your spiritual blessings or some other type of blessings?
2. The past-tense verb in verse 3 (*has blessed us*) means you have already received the spiritual blessings: chosen, predestined, redeemed. How does your life give testimony to this fact?
3. How does it feel to know that, before God started laying the foundation for Creation, He made a choice about you? He chose to see a sinner like you as holy and blameless (v4).
4. In "predestining" you (v5), did God lock you into a certain decision (i.e. faithful or rebel), or did He lock in a destination for you based on your decision to accept Him or reject Him?
5. God is both rich in grace (v7) and generous with His grace (v6). Describe a time when you behaved like a spoiled rich kid by squandering your heavenly Father's grace.
6. God believed He was exercising good judgment by investing heavily in your freedom (7-8). What kind of return are you giving God on His investment?
7. Describe the emotions you feel when you truly contemplate the fact that God chose you (v4)? That God adopted you (5)? That God redeemed you (v7)?
8. God's spiritual blessings come to you in Jesus (v4), through Jesus Christ (v5), in the One the Father loves (v6), and through Jesus' blood (7). Why is Jesus so central to your salvation?
9. This passage is packed with "decision" language. God chose us (v4). God predestined us according to His will (v5). God redeemed us with all wisdom and understanding (v7, 8). Why is God so determined to have you with Him in heaven?

PRAYER TIME - Praise God for his rich blessings. Praise Jesus for making God's rich blessings available to you. Thank God the Father and Jesus Christ for their amazing love.