

Ephesians 1:1-6

Ephesians
Get Rich Quick

The article in the newspaper was titled, "87 Year Old Man Died in Poverty: Worth \$1.5 Million."

It read this way, "Miami Beach, FL. An 87 year old man refused to bathe or to change clothes and died surrounded by old newspapers and cockroaches. But he left an estate of at least \$1.5 million, police say."

Police found David Gelgor dead in his retirement hotel in a room containing no money, no television, no radio, but filled with stocks, bonds, and bank statements.

"I added some of them up to over \$1 million," said Detective Sgt. Emery Zerick.

Mr. Gelgore was certainly a strange individual. We have no idea what confusion was reigning in his mind at the time of his death. But one thing's for sure, David Gelgor didn't make use of his wealth.

He was wealthy enough, but he chose to settle for poverty and squalor.

Now I'm sure you're thinking, what a sad story. There must have been something really wrong with that guy to live like that. There was.

But you know what? There's a lot of other David Gelgors walking around. Maybe there's even some sitting in this room. People who have access to unbelievable wealth but who live in squalor and don't even know it.

Today I'd like us to see what those riches are and how we can make them ours.

A wholly devoted follower of Jesus Christ named Paul was in prison in Rome. He was caught up in a riot in Jerusalem, appealed his case to Caser, and sat in prison for two years waiting for Nero to rule on his case.

During the Summer of the year 62 AD Paul wrote 3 letters, possibly on the same day, and dispatched them by the same messenger, a man named Tychicus.

One letter was to a man named Philemon, the other was to a congregation in Colossi, and the third was to the church at Ephesus.

Paul was a missionary, and his strategy was to always go to major cities, preach the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ, organize churches, and let the message of Jesus just work its way out to the other areas.

Ephesus was the capital of the Roman province of Asia, which we call Asia minor today. The ruins of Ephesus are in modern day Turkey.

As kind of a side note, when you look at the strongholds of early Christianity they're all Islamic countries today.

This is just my opinion, but I believe that what we're seeing today with the war between radical Islam and the West is the result of centuries of Christians being distracted from being wholly devoted followers of Christ.

Just like Israel was supposed to be a light in the pagan world for God so was the church. And just like Israel got so caught up with its own comfort and pleasure, so have we.

Over the centuries God used pagan nations who worshipped foreign gods to overrun Israel. I have to wonder if that isn't what's going on today.

The church became self-absorbed. We disregarded the Muslim world when it came to missions. Even today with the tremendous thrust to evangelize the Muslim world we send one missionary for every one million Muslims. And today we're reaping the fruit of God's judgment.

Well, according to Acts 19, Paul spent 3 1/2 years in Ephesus, which is longer than he spent in any other location.

Obviously Ephesus was a strategic spot.

By the time Paul wrote this letter, it had been 5 years since his last visit. He's writing to encourage the church but also to correct some problems. The main one being some racial tension between Christians with Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds.

Just this past week I received this letter in the mail. It says on the envelope, "Rush Priority Express. Extremely Important!"

Here's how the 28 page letter begins, "Dear Ed, I am so confident you will find the

enclosed information vital to your future as a real estate investor that I'm ready to pay you \$100 just to read it." Then the rest of the 28 pages tells me how for \$697 I can attend a seminar where I learn Donald Trump's real estate strategies.

Of course testimonies the people who attended past seminars is included. They made fast, easy money, have quit their regular jobs and are living the good life. Whether they are or not, I don't know, but the appeal of getting rich quick must be a strong one because every time you turn around somebody else is ready to sell you the way to get there.

What's really amazing is how many of us would go for something that promised us a couple of bucks, and completely miss out of riches that can't even be measured.

This morning as we begin to unpack the letter to the Ephesians I want us to see how fabulously wealthy a person who is born into God's family really is.

I. A Believer Is Infinitely Rich **Ephesians 1 Pg 1037**

Read vs 1-2

Ephesians has plenty to say about riches. Look at some verses:

Ephesians 1:7

Ephesians 1:18

Ephesians 2:4

Ephesians 2:7

Ephesians 3:8

Ephesians 3:16

For all I know I could pay the \$697 for the RealInvestors.com conference and end up applying what I'd learn and make lots of money. I'm never going to find out so I can't report back to you.

But even if I did become rich everything I'd accumulate would be temporary.

I know this is tough to work through because we live by what we can experience and feel, but God supplies wealth that is unaffected by wars, the price of oil, interest rates, and the real estate market.

Look at how Ephesians starts off here. Paul says I'm writing to you, verse 2, who are the "saints" at Ephesus.

This is huge. Every person who by simple faith trusts Jesus Christ as Savior is declared to be a saint in the kingdom of God.

We think of a saint as someone who's been canonized by a church. Someone who's kind of a cut above other people. But that's not how the Bible uses the word "saint."

The Greek term the Bible uses is *hagios*. It's basic meaning is to be "set apart for something." And in the New Testament it means "to be set apart for God."

It's applied to every person who has faith in Jesus Christ, and here's why.

According to the Bible, we're all born separated from God. We're sinners who don't measure up to God's perfect standards.

Some people try harder than others, but in the end none of us come close to divine perfection.

God accepts nothing less than perfection. He can't. He's perfect, heaven is perfect, and His kingdom is perfect.

In fact, not only can't God accept imperfection, He must judge it.

Now people intuitively know there's something wrong between God and the human race so they try to come up with solutions to the problem. We call those religions.

Of course, no religion can make us perfect, so in the end religions hurt more than they help because they give the false impression that we're OK.

Only God can bridge the gap between our imperfection and God's perfection. God did that in a way that no human being could have ever devised.

He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to take our place.

In other words, Jesus Christ took the divine judgment for our sins.

But then God took things one step further. When we trust Christ as Savior God covers us with divine holiness.

The Bible says, *For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.* II Corinthians 5:21

Here's how we can be saints: **Turn to Romans 4 pg 1001**

Read vs 1-8

See the words "accounted" and "counted" in verses 3,4, and 5? And then the word "impute" in verses 6 and 8?

Each time they're a translation of a Greek book keeping term, *logizomai*. It literally means "To put to the account of" or "Write in the ledger book."

The imagery is powerful. By faith we believe that God is our Savior and God writes in the column by our name "Righteous," "Not guilty."

All this is based upon the fact that Jesus Christ took our sins upon Himself. His Holiness is put to our account on the ledger book of heaven.

but there's part 2 to this. There's something that's not put there. *Blessed is the man to whom the Lord shall not impute sin.*

Our sins aren't charged to us, but Christ's righteousness is. That's why all who trust Christ are called "Saints."

And notice how clearly the Bible puts this. None of this is because of what we do. It's all because of God's work through Christ.

Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ? Have you trusted Him? He's the way, the truth, and the life, and no one comes to the Father except through Him!

So a believer is infinitely rich. We're saints in God's kingdom.

I. A Believer Is Infinitely Rich

II. A Believer Is Infinitely Blessed

Back to Ephesians 1 Read vs 3

You get the impression that as Paul's writing letter and he thinks about what God has done for us, he kind of blurts out, "Blessed be God!"

There's two words translated "blessed" in the New Testament. One of them, *makarios*, is used almost exclusively of people and it means "to be happy."

In the Sermon on the Mount, when Jesus said, "Blessed are the merciful, For they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart, For they shall see God.' He used the word that means "happy."

The second word is the one we have here. It's the word *eulogetos*. It's where we get our English word "eulogy" and it means, "to speak well of."

Here's what happens. When we really grab a hold of the truth of what God has done for us, we can't keep quite about Him.

There's a number of us in this room who profess to have trusted Christ as Savior. We've appropriated His work at the cross by faith.

Here's the question, do we really adore this God who's so richly blessed us? Do we know what it is to be moved to just blurt out, "Blessed be God?"

Or are we so wrapped up in ourselves, and our problems, and issues, and agendas that God just takes a back seat in our lives?

How do you get to that point? How to you get to the place where you're lost in the wonder of God's grace?

It comes for really grabbing onto 2 things; who God is and what He's done. He's the holy, sovereign, majestic, king of the universe who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing.

Let me repeat that. With every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.

That's amazing. But isn't it just like us to read over a verse like verse 3, yawn, and think, "Ho hum. That's nice but it doesn't have anything to do with where I really live."

The truth is, it has everything to do with where we really live. Understanding who God is and what He's done for us changes our whole perspective on life.

It impacts our marriage, our family, our boy-girl relationships, how we do our job, it shapes our entire view of life.

Too often God's grace isn't even in the picture for us. We get so absorbed with our problems and issues that we just get pulled into a downward spiral of discouragement and even depression.

God wants us to see things as they really are and that starts with praising Him for every spiritual blessing. That's how a guy chained in a Roman prison with a death sentence over his head could write these words.

God was so real to him, he couldn't see things any other way.

How real is God to you?

Remember something, if you've been blessed with every spiritual blessing than no one; not even Jesus Christ when He walked this earth in the flesh, has any more access to God's power, blessing, riches, fulness, and inheritance, than you do today.

They're yours. How do you appropriate them? Ephesians 1:3 and Joshua 1:3, in the Old Testament, provide what I think is an interesting comparison.

Ephesians 1:3 emphasizes God's responsibility and actions. *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.*

Now turn back to **Joshua 1:3 Pg 194 Read**

Here's our responsibility. In Joshua God had promised the land of Canaan to the Jews. He brings them right up to the border and says "it's yours. I'm giving it to you. Every place you take and claim for yourself you get to keep."

Every believer possesses all spiritual blessings in Christ. God has given them to us. But unless we're conscious they exist and unless we appropriate them for ourselves they won't be anything more than words on a page.

All that we study, from here out, in the Book of Ephesians will be meaningless to you unless you claim it's truth.

God is to be blessed because He has blessed us.

I. A Believer Is Infinitely Rich

II. A Believer Is Infinitely Blessed

III. A Believer Is Infinitely Secure In Christ

Back to Ephesians 1 Read 4-6

All down through church history people have debated words like "chosen," "elected," and "predestined." In fact wars have actually been fought over the interpretation of these words.

There are some who believe that the Bible teaches that God chose some for salvation and others for condemnation. While there's all kinds of variations on that basic philosophy, since John Calvin was the first to systematize the teachings of unconditional election, we call those who hold that idea, Calvinists.

Ephesians Chapter 1 is often used to teach the idea that God decided who would believe and who wouldn't before the world began.

Now it's obvious that God is sovereign and in control of human history. He's brining things to pass in the world just as He said He would.

If you doubt that just look at the Middle East. All of Biblical prophecy is centered in the Middle East. God is setting the stage for the ultimate end times events.

But God in His sovereignty also has given human beings the opportunity to accept or reject His Son.

No one will face the judgment and be able to say, "But God, I couldn't have believed in Christ because I wasn't chosen."

Ephesians chapter 1 teaches a very precious truth.

As verse 4 explains, God chose us in Christ. Before there was time. Before the events of Genesis 1:1, God chose us in Christ.

Peter wrote: *Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "Behold, I lay in Zion A chief cornerstone, elect, precious, And he who believes on Him will by no means be put to shame."*
I Peter 2:6

Jesus Christ was chosen by the Father to have the place of preeminence.

The Father chose the Son for blessing. As believers, we are in Christ. As believers we share in that election.

We are holy, because we are in a holy Christ. We are blessed because we're in a blessed Christ. And we're chosen because we're in a chosen Christ.

I'm not here to say that my pint-size brain can understand all the mysteries of God's working, but I do believe that Ephesians is saying that God in eternity past, chose all believers to be holy and blameless.

In fact, according to verse 5, He's predestined us to adoption as His sons.

The word "predestined" is a translation of the word *proorizo*. *Pro* means "before" and *orizo* means "to mark off with a boundary."

We get our English word "horizon" from "orizo." The horizon is the boundary of the Earth and sky.

The verb *proorizo* has nothing to do with destination. It means "to mark a boundary beforehand."

What parameters has God laid out ahead of time? That we who have trusted in Jesus Christ should receive what the Bible calls adoption.

When we use the term "adoption" today we mean "to take a person born into one family and make them part of another family."

The Bible uses adoption in a much different way. There's only one way to get into God's family. That's through the new birth.

What Paul is doing here is drawing on an illustration that's foreign to us, but very familiar to the Ephesians.

In the first century Greek culture minor children had no rights in the family. In fact, there were even slaves whose job it was to raise the child, especially boys, until they became of age.,

The child was actually subject to a slave in the father's household.

But finally, there came a day when the father took his son into the city square and placed on his shoulder the toga varillus, the garment of manhood. From that day on he was an adult son with all the rights and privileges that went along with sonship.

turn with me to Galatians 4 Pg 1035 Read vs 1-6

That ceremony was called in Greek, *huiiothesia* "son placing" which is the exact word translated "adoption" in Ephesians 1:5.

This is striking imagery.

Not only are we chosen to be holy and blameless, but we are placed as adult members of the family of God with all the rights and privileges that go along with our position.

We can sign the checkbook. All the blessings are ours.

And all of this is up to the good pleasure of God's will. It was His plan, His working, His decision, all we could do is humbly respond in faith believing and then sep out and claim those blessings.

Verse 6, all this is to the praise of the glory of His grace.

It has nothing to do with our goodness. It has nothing to do with what we deserve. It's all about God and His glory.

God has made us the accepted ones by placing us in His Son who is His beloved.

The Bible says that all who believe are predestined to three things. The boundary lines are marked out in three areas.

Romans 8:29 Believers are predestined to be conformed to the image of Christ.

Ephesians 1:5 Believers are predestined to be placed as adult sons in the family of God.

Ephesians 1:11-12 Believers are predestined to be to the praise of God's glory.

Isn't it amazing how completely, totally, utterly, perfectly, entirely, wholly, fully, thoroughly, unreservedly, unconditionally rich we are in Christ? And God guarantees that we will ultimately experience those riches.

But the book of Ephesians is about experiencing them right now. It's about wrapping our minds and our hearts around who God really is and what He's done for us through His Son.

Have you gotten a little bit of that today? Have you caught a glimpse of God's awesome majesty and your unworthiness?

If you have, you can come to God today and receive His life and His blessings.

The Bible says, *Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ... He was buried, and ... He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures.*

Want to get rich? Claim the riches that God has provided for you personally. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved...*