

*Sermon on Ephesians 1:7-10 prepared by Jonathan Shradar*

## **Ephesians 1:7-10**

**In Christ we have total forgiveness and an exciting future.**

The men had gathered early in the morning, we talked about the weather, health, politics, and then turned to the text.

**Matthew 5:3** “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.”

In the sermon on the mount, the picture of life in the Kingdom, it begins here, in want, need, poverty of spirit.

We spent the hour with just this verse, thinking of what this entails, who it is for, how we are those who have the kingdom of heaven.

“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,[a]  
for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.”

“You’re blessed when you’re at the end of your rope. With less of you there is more of God and his rule.” MSG

Longing for something different, for the end of sin, sickness, division, and death.

Poverty of spirit, this is us, looking around, acquainted with the world, and sensing it is meant to be better.

Desperate for the One who makes it better.

Ephesians reveals what is provided for the poor in spirit who turn to Jesus in belief and trust.

A book that begins in worship. **Ephesians 1:3-14**. Soak in it.

All of this is ours in Christ. A description of our union with him in faith.

“Union with Christ is not a single specific blessing we receive in our salvation. Rather it is the best phrase to describe all the blessings of salvation. We have unconditional election in Christ (v. 4), adoption in Christ (v. 5), redemption and forgiveness in Christ (v. 7), and the fulfillment of God’s plan in Christ (v. 9), until the final uniting of all things in Christ (v. 10)... Our entire blessedness—our victory, our happiness, our hope—is bound up in our being bound to Christ.” GTB

Our three verses for today solve the ache for something better. For resolution to the troubles of our souls and this world.

What we get, How we get it, and Where it’s headed.

**In Christ we have total forgiveness and an exciting future.**

### **What We Get**

Total forgiveness. When we come to Jesus and believe in him, that he lived, died, and was resurrected for us, we gain total forgiveness.

In December I spoke to Club Hope at Del Dios Middle School. (Middle School ministry is not my bag!) After my talk a 7th grader asked some good questions, key among them being “Why do we need to be forgiven?”

Humanity was not meant for strife, evil, violence, selfishness... all that corrupts our world. Creation established humanity in the garden, a place of peace, work, and communion with God.

But our first parents, falling for deception violated a command to abstain from the fruit of one tree and since all of humanity has been anchored in disobedience. The condition that curses creation.

Sin - missing the mark. Open rebellion against what God says, a disregard for our Creator, elevation of ourselves above Him.

God’s holiness - that he is unique, perfect. Sin can’t relate to him. Adam and Eve sent out of the garden because of it.

**Psalm 5:4** “For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you.” (ESV)

Each of us has owned this reality. Even if we think we are generally good, we are not sinless.

In light of this, God chooses a people to display what life like him is like. The provision, the place. But regular sacrifices of blood, to handle the sin of the people, only pointed to the need for an atoning sacrifice (that which can “make amends or reparation”) that would permanently solve the problem of sin.

**Ephesians 1:7a** “In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses...” (ESV)

Forgiveness. What we need to relate to God, to free us from slavery to sin and self.

We might find it gross! After all it is through his blood, but blood has been used to highlight the significance of sin and relationship with God since he first killed an animal to cover Adam and Eve in their shame in the garden. But finally, it is sufficient.

“...it is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.”

**Hebrews 10:12–14** “But when Christ had offered for all time a single sacrifice for sins, he sat down at the right hand of God, [13] waiting from that time until his enemies should be made a footstool for his feet. [14] For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified.” (ESV)

Handles all sin. Forgiveness is not partial in Christ, it is total.

“Total forgiveness is something to celebrate. It is beyond anything positive thinking, therapy, or hypnosis can provide. It is complete, extending to the conscious and unconscious sins in our lives, because God knows all things and because Jesus’ blood is infinite.” Kent Hughes

What was promised all along.

Giving an image of what is to come in Jesus... **Isaiah 44:22** “I have blotted out your transgressions like a cloud and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.” (ESV)

**Micah 7:18–19** “Who is a God like you, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of his inheritance? He does not retain his anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. [19] He will again have compassion on us; he will tread our iniquities underfoot. You will cast all our sins into the depths of the sea.” (ESV)

John Calvin said, in preaching on this very text in Geneva in 1558, “God puts our sins out of his remembrance and drowns them in the depths of the sea, and, moreover, receives the payment that was offered him in the person of his only Son.”

“Ps. 103:12 is the perfect commentary: “As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us.” Where does the east begin, where does the west end? When our sins are so far removed from us, sent away so far from us by God himself, they are removed from us forever. The psalmist properly names the east and the west and not the north and the south lest someone think of the poles, of the distance of the north pole from the south pole, which is a definite distance. The psalmist indicates a distance that no man can measure: “as far as the east is from the west,” this is the great distance that God’s (forgiveness) “sending away” removes our transgressions from us the instant we are brought to faith.”

Freedom. No longer bound by sin. No longer burdened by performance.

### **How We Get It**

By his blood, we come to him who gives us favor we could never deserve.

**Ephesians 1:7b–8** “according to the riches of his grace, [8] which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight (ESV)

We get it by his grace.

This is what makes total forgiveness so sweet, it is not earned by us, or even maintained by our will but sourced solely in Jesus by the grace of the Father.

Not just a bit of it either... Like Nutella toast. If you just put a scrape of it on the toast you barely get the sweet taste... but if you put it on thick it overwhelms! That is God's grace toward us! Sweet, overwhelming, and worth worshiping him for.

Grace lavished upon us. Forgiveness according to the riches of his grace. It's inexhaustible, keeps us, meets us each day, and is never drawn down.

“John D. Rockefeller was once the richest man in the world, the richest man America had produced. If Rockefeller wished to give of his riches there were two ways he could—according to his riches or from his riches. History records that he most often did the latter, giving from his riches. The most famous picture of Rockefeller shows him as a wizened old man, dressed in a top hat and cutaway coat giving a dime to some little waif. Rockefeller reportedly did this again and again for the press to dutifully photograph. One wonders how many boys were truly set on the road to wealth and moral excellence by a wonderful gift from Rockefeller's fortune.

But think what it would have been like had he given according to his riches. If he had done that, he would have perhaps given a grand home, *endless wonderful art and statues, abundance.*”

God gives to us according to the riches of his grace. More than enough, exactly what we need.

This grace is the power of Christ in us.

**2 Corinthians 12:8–9** “Three times I pleaded with the Lord about this, that it should leave me. [9] But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me.” (ESV)

Where our longing, our need for redemption is met. It is this grace.

“So great are the riches of God’s grace in Christ that God must make us abound in “all wisdom” and must add “all intelligence” so that we may apply all of it in the varying situations of our life.”

Life will change, you will gain new skills, become different. But all of it is by the grace of God. And that is good news. Because it’s free - for those that turn from their own way of living and thinking and embrace Christ, his way, his grace. The mystery made known.

Total forgiveness is the foretaste of his kingdom, grace is the fuel for it.

### **Where We are Headed**

**Ephesians 1:9–10** “making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ [10] as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” (ESV)

That sense of wanting something better - aimed toward renewal. For the fullness of time... closer than it’s ever been.

“The redeemed see that a new order is coming. It was a “mystery,” a secret, in times past, not because it was incomprehensible, but because it was undiscoverable by human reason.<sup>8</sup> It could only be known through divine revelation. What is “the mystery”? Simply this: in “the fullness of time” (in other words, at the appropriate time), God will “unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.”

Reconciliation in Jesus. God to man, human to human, all of creation. We live to proclaim it and invite others into the kingdom.

As Paul did...

**2 Corinthians 5:14–21** “For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; [15] and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.

[16] From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. [17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. [18] All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; [19] that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (ESV)

We live to see the renewal of redemption reach all who are poor in spirit. We labor to see the remaking of our world in Christ - bringing shalom now by serving the least as we anticipate that day still to come.

**Revelation 21:1–4** “Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. [2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. [3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. [4] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.” (ESV)

**In Christ we have total forgiveness and an exciting future.**

*Live under the banner of this total forgiveness.* Know that his grace is sufficient, for even you! It is all we need.

*Tell somebody about it!* Be an ambassador of reconciliation, telling of the kingdom of heaven, of Christ uniting all things in him for his glory and our good.

“God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him,[a] for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.”

Our need met, redemption given, grace lavished upon us. Rejoice!