

Ephesians 1:1-3
Proper Praise

This morning we turn our attention to (and as Lance allowed me to reveal it to you, and the bulletin actually revealed it to you) the book of Ephesians. We turn to the book of Ephesians, and I am just eager, I am excited, to get into this letter with all of us as a church. I am excited to study through this. This book has made an indelible mark on my life, it has made a huge impact for me; one of the times studying through it when I was in college and just becoming more and more enraptured with its content, because what you have in here is a beautiful book loaded with profound theology, and wonderful truths about the church and what God has done to actually secure and accomplish and actually purchase His bride, the church, and how that then introduces itself and looks in terms of practical walking and living that out. So we are looking forward to our time in Ephesians where we will center on that theme of the church, and see so many great profound theological truths come forth and hopefully impact our everyday life.

For this morning, we are going to see one in particular - as we kind of introduce the book, and get into the very beginning of the content - we are going to focus on this concept of worship. Worship and as I have entitled it "proper praise." What is true Worship? What does it truly mean to worship God? And what does proper praise of God look like? Well, unfortunately, we are in a time where there is a lot of, kind of, misunderstanding and misconception about worship. Some people are just completely confused to the extent of just equating it with singing: what we just did was worship and that's all. We can turn to Romans 12:1 and be reminded of Paul's words that we are to offer our lives up as really an "offering to God," "a living sacrifice" that is our "acceptable act of worship unto God." So worship is far more than just singing, it is a full on offering of ourselves to God, as scripture declares that, as it is made known.

But still in the whole realm of Christianity and this whole idea and concept of evangelicalism, there is still a lot of bad teaching and understanding when it comes to worship. For instances, I'll give you one example here: this comes from, not a pastor, but his wife. They are both like a pastor team duo, and so this is her trying to rally up the people before a worship service on a Sunday morning, this is what she says, "I just want to encourage every one of us to realize when we obey God, we're not doing it for God—I mean,

that's one way to look at it—we're doing it for ourselves, because God takes pleasure when we're happy. That's the thing that gives Him the greatest joy. So, I want you to know this morning: Just do good for your own self. Do good because God wants you to be happy. When you come to church, when you worship Him, you're not doing it for God really. You're doing it for yourself, because that's what makes God happy. Amen?" (The congregation applauds.)

The congregation applauded, and they totally were excited, and I am glad you guys aren't clapping right now, so that's good. As you can tell, this is up there as a very bad example. This is not worship. This is not worship. But this is a very common concept and understanding of worship in Christianity. Why do you identify with Christ? Why do you go to church? Why are you a Christian? "Because of what it does for me. And when I worship and when I go to those worship services and when I identify with this label of Christian, God just really is that means to the greater end of my own happiness." And that's what people think it is. They have this concept of the Christian life and the idea of worship as looking something like this.

Well that's not the case, so let's get that off there. Alright, that's not the case - that is not at all even close and we are going to see today - we are going to see this morning what true worship does in fact look like, and learn from Paul himself. What we are aiming for is what Jesus said in John 4:23-24, "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

That's what we are after, we want to worship in spirit and in truth. That's what we want, that's what we desire, and where do we obviously go to find that? We have to go to His Word and this is what we are going to see, we are going to see Paul's own example of what this looks like to worship in spirit and in truth, Paul being a model for us, among several other models that we could look at it in Scripture, but that's what we will see as we introduce this book, and get into this model of worship for us. Let's look at our text and let's read the first three verses of this letter to the Ephesians, "1 Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus: 2 Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. 3 Blessed be the God and Father of our

Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.”

We are going to cut it off right there. Unfortunately verses 3-14 is kind of like this long run on sentence but we've got to chop it up at some point so we are just going to introduce that long beautiful kind of run on sentence for this morning.

Before we get to that model of worship which is where I want to get to in verse three, we have to introduce this letter, and so that's what we are going to see in verses 1 and 2. We are going to see some words of introduction. We introduce this letter that we are now jumping into and getting ourselves acquainted with. In this introduction, lots of commonalities with other letters of the New Testament, the Epistles of the New Testament and the writers, and how they wrote these letters, were often to either churches or people, individuals, and the introductions are pretty common, and pretty similar at many times. They have these different parts that make it up. And so we have three main parts that come together for this introduction.

The first is the author, we get to see the author, and this is common, where you will have the author identified, not all the time, but that's what we have for our letter before us, “Paul an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God.”

Good to be reminded of some of these things. First we see it's Paul, and the benefit we have, is in studying the book of Acts, when Gerry has been taking us through that, we have been seeing a pretty good background and understanding of the person of Paul. Saul, who was called Paul and became a mighty instrument and tool used in the hand of God for the establishment and growth and, really, propagation of the church.

He calls himself an apostle of Christ Jesus. An apostle. That word apostle is that word that essentially means the one who has been sent and it's not just that you are on a mission you have been sent but you have the authority, you have the authorization, of the one who did in fact send you. This is what Paul is claiming, that he is in fact sent by Christ Jesus. Right, he is in fact, having that authority, and of course we could think, “wait a minute, the apostles,” as we think about that, “those are the people that followed Jesus around right?”

And that is one way to understand the apostles, they are clearly the twelve that were with Jesus and seeing his ministry and seeing Him in His resurrection and His ascension and going up to heaven and then starting the church in the book of Acts, but from there, there were added other leaders to that group, other leaders that came into and were gifted with this gift of apostleship and they are the ones that wrote the new testament that we have.

So it extends even beyond the twelve to people like Paul and we can even know his background and recognize he is a very unique individual, very unique in his apostleship. And he even claims that about himself, "I am unique, I am one untimely born," right? God brought him into this program in establishment of the church in a very unique way. In fact just to be reminded of that, that's exactly what we have been seeing in the book of Acts. That's what we just covered last week. If you remember last week Paul had that chance to give testimony and what was he testifying to? How it truly was, as he says here, the will of God in his life, to completely change his course to change his direction, from what he was doing to now be a mighty instrument for God. Paul the one who was the religious zealot, the Pharisees of Pharisees, the one who was persecuting the church, who was on his way to Damascus to find more Christians to throw into prison and to persecute, that's the guy we are talking about. Literally it was completely the will of God, there was no work on Paul's part to say, "you know what, I am going to mix it up and try this Christianity thing out." It was completely and totally the will of God that Jesus appeared to him and said, "why are you persecuting me?" - completely stopped Paul, brought him to his knees, to this place, blinded him by His glory and then was changed and no longer could be the same, and now lived to give glory to God. This is Paul, our author. This is the one we have been actually seeing. This is not a self assigned title, he is not giving himself his own authority - and none of the apostles are doing this - but we know that significantly for Paul because of how God intervened in his life and changed it completely.

So that's the first element of this: we see the author is Paul, writing, "sent by God," authorized by Christ. And as far as the background is concerned, he is actually in jail at this time, he is actually in jail. This is a prison epistle, or a prison letter. He is been doing some ministry for some time and now as he is in jail he is making the most of his time in jail to keep the ministry going, and so he writes this letter. And that is only God's providence and

sovereignty that we have some of Scripture written for us because of the persecution of the church.

So we don't just see the author but we also see the audience in this first, these first few verses for us. The audience is "To the saints who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus." We have this theological description of the audience. They are described as saints and they are described as faithful. Those are really kind of two terms coming together that we would identify very clearly as those who are believers. Saints being that term of those who are holy or consecrated unto God. Consecrated, set apart for that service, for that act unto him, for a life lived for Him. And then as he says later, they are "faithful in Christ Jesus." They are truly living as believers in Christ Jesus. This is who they are, it's one and the same, it's not like you are a saint but you're not faithful. It goes together, if you are set apart unto God, you are truly believing in Him.

Then he gives a location, these are the ones who are "in Ephesus." This is where they are, "in Ephesus." And you might have some discrepancies, some Bibles might have like a note or something saying "we are not sure if the words 'in Ephesus' are really in there; if Paul actually wrote that," but as we did with the end of Mark, and so you can do with this, you can actually dig down deeper into this, you can look into Greek manuscripts and you find there is tons of documentation to support that the words "in Ephesus" are really there and Paul is intending, he actually did write this to that particular location. Ephesus, itself, being a very massive and significant location. As we've considered back in the book of Acts and the missionary journeys, and in Asia Minor (in the modern Turkey region there) you have these kind of major cities there, and Ephesus is the largest. It is kind of one of the big cities of the time, around the Mediterranean Sea, that rivals with some of the other ones. Not obviously as big as Rome but big in the way that it is utilized and strategic. It is utilized for sea transport and trading as well as even by land in the major routes that go through it. Ephesus was a prominent location.

Even in Paul's own ministry as we learn in the book of Acts, he spend a lot of time there. He spends around three years there ministering and actually building up the church. And as we keep going through the New Testament, we see even more attention given to Ephesus, not just Paul being there for an extended period of time, but then taking Timothy, his son in the faith, and

saying, “now you go, and you pastor in Ephesus.” So then Timothy spends some time there. And then from church history we actually find out that even the apostle John pastored there, and was there in Ephesus for some time. And of course in the book of Revelation, when Jesus comes and gives his particular message to the seven churches of Asia Minor, Ephesus is there mentioned first.

So we have a lot of attention given to Ephesus, this was obviously a prominent region in terms of the times and the culture, but also theologically, as the Gospel comes here and the church grows and this would be a massive place for the growth of Christianity in the Gentile world even. This is who it is written to.

As we will find, it is very impersonal. There is not a whole lot of list of names or people he is trying to greet as you go through the letter and its very probable this letter was not just written for the church in Ephesus, but it was intended for them to kind of circulate it around to other cities and other churches that would be nearby as he actually told the Colossians to do when he wrote his letter to them. So this is perhaps to be both to the Ephesians and to the churches that are around there.

So we have the author: it is Paul. We have the audience established as those believers, the church there in Ephesus and more than likely even beyond. And then we have this brief address in verse two, and this is just a brief greeting, a salutation, alright, a brief greeting, that comes here, “Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.”

It is interesting, when you look at this phrase and you kind of are studying the other greetings and salutations that were commonly used at that time, there were greetings that the Jews had with one another when they were greeting each other; there were greetings among the Gentiles in the typical ways that people would greet each other; and the cool thing about this is, this is unique. This is not something that you find just kind of lifted from the way that people were greeting each other like in the Roman guard or something. This is something unique that the church probably created. This is a phrase that they actually coined you could say, because it’s not just Paul that uses this phrase often but even Peter uses it in his letters and John will use it as well. So this is a phrase that the church has decided to latch onto and use as a way to greet each other.

Why? Well the content is pretty wonderful “grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” First of all the word “grace.” A massive word, right, a loaded word. As one commentator states, “its the Gospel in one word, grace.” Right? Man, unable on their own to actually make their path to God, to actually will themselves to God, and so grace, being the necessary element, the very unmerited favor of God that comes to mankind. That idea of the concept of it being a gift as we will see later in Ephesians 2. This concept of God giving of Himself, giving to those who are helpless and in need, sinners like you and I. And grace that continues beyond just the salvation call, but grace that continued to sustain and enable us to live a life for Him. Grace, a loaded and wonderful word that is God moving to you, not you moving to God. And even right there you have the difference of Christianity from so many other religions: God steps down and moves in His grace towards mankind.

And what's the result of that? Peace, peace, “grace to you from God and also peace.” It is peace with God that is the result and peace with one another that can take place within the church because of God’s work. As is stated by one commentator, “therefore, grace expresses the cause: God’s gracious work; and peace, the effect, of God’s work.” Grace is the cause and peace is that effect, that comes from Him, as he states very clearly, it is “from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” So this is a wonderful greeting that is given to the church to continue to keep the Gospel, keep the truth, keep the very character and nature of God in the forefront.

At this point we can turn to verse three and this is where we will step into and this is where we will get more into the concept of worship and what a good model of worship looks like just from this one verse so that’s what we are going to see. So worship initiated in verse three. Worship initiated in verse three.

First off, just note the unmistakable enthusiasm in Paul at the beginning of this letter, verse three “blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.” It’s excitement, there is enthusiasm there, I mean if you just even think of some of the other letters that he wrote in the New Testament, they’re not all starting like this, often times, there's a prayer, or there is some kind of recollection of how things are going, or there is a little

more basic introductory matter, but this is just launching out of the cannon, this is absolutely explosive in the way that he goes right into blessing God. He wants to worship, he wants to shout this, he is praising God. That's hopefully the sense you are getting when you read a verse like verse three, he does this very quick identification of himself and the audience and then, bam! He is off worshipping God, he can't wait to praise God. Like the second grader that just has their hand in the air, they can't wait to blurt out the answer when they are called upon, that's Paul. He is launching into praise. Launching into worship, and what we see is this excitement, it really extends all the way through verse 14 and that's what Greek scholars in looking at this, they're just like, it's a hard thing to punctuate this passage. It's hard to know where to put commas and periods and where to try to break it up because it is just one long thought. It's a beautiful doxology of giving praise to God, but how do you start to chop it up so we can actually read it, otherwise it's this long run on sentence? That's what it is, it's this long run on sentence of praise and adoration unto God and hopefully that's the sense you get just when you start it in verse three.

So let's look at the first of these three characteristics that we learn about proper praise as we look more into verse three. First we see that proper praise revolves around God. Proper praise revolves around God, much to the opposite of that quote that we started with, where the praise was revolving around the person, the man. "Blessed be the God and father of our Lord Jesus Christ," very clear right? "Blessed be God." He is not lumping himself into that. He is not lumping the saints into that. He is saying it is all praise, all blessing, and honor, and glory are going to God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This word blessed is actually the Greek word "eulogatos" and every time it's used in the New Testament, it's only used of God. It's not used of people. And it's obviously where we get that word eulogy, this idea of speaking well of, we are speaking well of someone and every time it's used, it's being used only for God, God alone is the One who deserves this recognition. God alone is the One who is on a whole other pedestal, a whole other plain, when it comes to this kind of blessing and praise. That's what Paul is saying, You alone, only for God, this is the only possible starting point for worship. Worship is actually identified as worship when God is the one receiving it. Anything else is not worship anymore. It's worship of a false god, an idol of some sort.

Unfortunately, that's what mankind has shown over and over in his pursuit and worship of other gods. This is what man is really good at. Man is really good at finding other things to try to worship and to try to bless and give glory and praise to. To give you some examples as Scripture even makes clear for us, people worship the creation rather than the creator, something that Paul tells us in Romans. People often worship the creation rather than the creator, "claiming to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things." This is what mankind has done all too easily and all too well. The obvious recognition that there is God who is creator and thus owner over all and given us, and created us, and given us everything we see and yet instead of using all of that as an opportunity to direct our eyesight back up to Him and giving Him praise we instead latch on to those things. And there is this exchange that takes place, an ironic shift, that happens here. The desires, the hopes, the ambitions, the pursuits of mankind are spent upon that which God has made rather than God himself. Rather than giving the proper and obvious adoration to the One who created it in the first place.

Like a little one, I am kind of reminded of little ones, in life, toddlers and babies, they like to find every object they can get their hand upon and try to stick it in their mouth as if it is going to give some nourishment to their appetite that they have right? And you realize, no, that's not going to nourish you, take it out of your mouth. Well in the same way, men and women, this is what mankind has done, they seek to find nourishment and satisfaction for their soul from anything and everything that is not God. They find anything they can, food, hobbies, relationships, money, and as we identify a list of things like this we can look around and say, those things aren't inherently sinful, but that's the point. It becomes a big deal when you try to take those things and nourish your soul. When you try to take those things and find that satisfaction that your Creator alone can give, and then you have engaged in idolatry. You are no longer worshipping God. You are worshipping the creation rather than the Creator. So this is what people do. They worship the creation rather than the Creator.

What else? People worship multiple gods. This is what people do. It's back in the Old Testament, clearly identified, still takes place today. "When Elijah came near to all the people and said, 'how long will you go limping between

two different opinions? If the Lord is God, follow him, but if Baal, then follow him.' And the people did not answer him a word."

And this is the same thing, we still have this confrontation, we still have this problem. People that are just trying to have this eclectic mix of beliefs and things that they are holding on to. They want a little bit of God and they like the concept of Jesus and the Bible and then they like to add in some other things as well and they get this nice mix that they are content with.

It makes sense. We have a society that's bent on celebrating diversity in all things and obviously expecting a customization for the consumer. And so you easily have people struggling with worshipping multiple gods, multiple things, multiple people, you name it. The bold affirmation is pretty simple, "you do you," right? You do you, and I'll do me, and that's really good for you, and that's great, and so this is what turns - that's what it turns into. It's rather than identifying one particular lane that you will stay in, it's just trying to mix in as much as you can because you are a consumer and so you can customize. So you throw a little bit of Jesus in along with whatever else you feel like. Unfortunately when it really comes to worshipping God, we know that God is not cool with the "you do you" strategy, right? He doesn't say, "O yeah, that's fine, I'm cool with you manipulating Me however you want." That's not how it works, God says, you know, He deserves all the glory and He will not share His glory with another. So don't even try. It's all His, it all belongs to Him, He has earned it. He is the Creator, so don't try to give glory to another in addition to Him.

So people worship multiple gods; also people just worship themselves. This is what Paul warned us about in 2 Timothy 3, "understand this that in these last days, there will come times of difficulty, where people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God." This is the same thing that we are encountering. It's truly an ungodly way to live. It's taking God out of the equation. Taking God out of it and totally looking at oneself, "everything I have, I was the one who got it for myself." That's ungodly, you remove God from the equation: denying any right or ownership that the Creator has over you. And you live for your own desires and pleasures.

Well just even from this, when Paul says, “blessed be [only and no one else] God,” we recognize that true worship and proper praise revolves around God. Not around you and I. Not around our feelings, not around our hopes, not around what we have in store, but around God. That is proper praise, that is true worship. So we have to ask ourselves. Do you seek work, relationships, hobbies, and the good things of life as a means of bringing people’s attention to God, like it should be? Or are you giving yourself to these good things without acknowledging that you have neglected God who gave them to you to enjoy in the first place? Or have you clearly identified Christ as the singular pursuit of your life? Is He truly the singular and exclusive pursuit of your life? Or are you content with giving equal time, attention and admiration to other pursuits in addition to Christ? So you have you successfully compartmentalized Him: He is there in your life along with some other things. God will not have that. Is your Christianity marked by decreasing awareness of self due to an increasing awareness of God and worship to Him or are you most concerned with your thoughts, your desires, your emotions, and your feelings in life? What is most important?

So Paul tells us very clearly that - and he models for us - that true worship, proper praise, revolves around God, and he gives us the way in which proper praise revolves around God. Really it’s because of the work of Christ. Proper praise revels in the work of God or you could say - I would say more specifically here - proper praise revels in the work of Christ. Proper praise revels in the work of Christ. As we go on, “blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing.”

Why is Paul blessing God? Why is Paul erupting in praise and honor and glory to God? Because God has blessed us. Because God has blessed him. He is recognizing - he is recognizing what God has done, God has extended Himself to His creation in blessing them, and so he turns right around and wants to give praise to God.

So we are not just worshipping God for who He is, but we are also worshipping God for what He has done. I mean this is how people become famous, this is how people become a big deal, they make some accomplishments, there is some feat that they have actually accomplished and done and now they have become well known because no one else has done it. Well, what does our text say, our text says that God has blessed us in

Christ. How has Christ become famous? How has Christ become known? Because He did the unthinkable, He did the impossible, right? He reversed the curse that mankind was stuck with since Genesis 3. That is a massive feat that no man could figure out, that no man could even get a good plan to fix that problem. But Jesus came and made Himself known by reversing that curse.

We remind ourselves that mankind has been subject to this curse since that fall in Eden. And we've only compounded it and made it worse. God has given us His law upon our hearts through the conscience that we have, understanding right and wrong, and we still have violated that, and He gives us His law in the Old Testament and the very clear character of who He is and what He demands, and people have still gone astray and Israel is the perfect demonstration of that. We have compounded our sin against God, the holy and righteous One.

So in the midst of that bleak scene for mankind, where no one is standing out and no one is rising to the top, Christ steps in to reverse that curse. As Galatians 3:13 says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us." He literally became that curse for us when He was nailed upon the tree and He willingly went to that cross. This involved not just an exchange of sin but also an exchange of righteousness. This is not just that Christ took our sin from us but He gives us His righteousness. As we continue to remind ourselves of 2 Corinthians 5:21, "for our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."

This exchange simply doesn't make sense that he takes our sin, we take his righteousness. Of course the curse of condemnation now has been lifted for those who are in Christ. "There is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus" as Paul says in Romans 8:1 and because of that we are a new creation. We truly have been made new. "We are new creation in Christ, the old has gone, but the new has come," as 2 Corinthians 5:17 states.

But notice this: notice that our text does not just say that God blessed us in Christ in order to reverse the curse. It doesn't just stop there, that He has blessed us in Christ. Our text says that God has blessed us "in Christ with every spiritual blessing," with every spiritual blessing. Now we have to ask, what does that even mean? What does that mean? How is it that God has

blessed us in Christ? I think we have a good idea because we know the work of Christ, but what is every spiritual blessing. Simply put, just look down at the rest of the text, just look down at the passage, scan with your eyes verses 4 through 14 and you will see unfolding and jumping off the page, blessing after blessing after blessing. We learn in verse four that we were chosen before the foundation of the world. We learn in verse five that we were predestined, we also learn in verse five that we were adopted into His family. In verse seven we see that we are redeemed by His blood. We also see in verse seven that we are forgiven all of our sins and trespasses. In verses nine through ten we see that the mystery of Christ has been made known to us and disclosed. In verse 11 we see that we have been obtained as an inheritance. In verse thirteen we have been sealed with the holy spirit. In verse fourteen we are guaranteed an inheritance. That is massive. Now you understand why Paul is a little excited. He is just stringing together all of these beautiful things. These are blessings, wonderful blessings, coming to the believer, from God. What He has accomplished. It's true, we can say that every Christian is sitting on a goldmine of spiritual blessings, that is the truth, that is the case, that is what God - that's not only who God is, that is what He has done.

If you are looking for a house you would not be content with driving around with your realtor and going to the curb and looking at a house and going "hmm, that's a nice house, maybe we should buy it, I don't know, let's drive to the next one..." You drive to the next one, at the curb, looking at the outside, "oh that looks like a nice house, let's go to the next one..." and you are going to make a decision? You are going to buy a house that you are going to live in the rest of your life just by looking at the outside of it? No of course not! You would never do that! You would want to go inside and explore every detail of that house, you want to see the rooms, you want to see the features, is it two story? What's upstairs? What is everything looking like? What condition is this in? You would want to know everything that you can about that.

Unfortunately, it seems like in a similar fashion, too many Christians are content with the street view of their salvation. It's kind of a street view of salvation that we settle for: "yeah, Christ, He died on the cross for our sins, that's nice." And you drive by the house and that's your salvation and you look at it from the outside and you say, "that's a nice house." That's ridiculous! Paul says, "no, no, no, no! you come with me, let me walk you

through this house!” You need to see every room, you need to see the beautiful details of what God has done, and how this has been taking place from eternity past and it will extend into eternity future! This is amazing what God has done! You need to see all of it! You need the depths of it! You and I, as believers, need to dig deeper. We have to dig deeper. Don’t be content for this street view of your salvation. Dig deeper and recognize all that God has done. May we be like the Psalmist in Psalm 77:11-12, “I will remember the deeds of the Lord, yes, I will remember your wonders of old, I will ponder all of your work and meditate on your mighty deeds.”

There is so much that God has done, that is worthy of our consideration, and our wonderment! We need to be amazed at what he has done. So how about you? Will you take that time? What are you doing to study the depths of the riches of His glorious grace given to us in the salvation plan of Christ? And if you are not doing much and you are content with the street view, what does that tell you about the content of your worship? These things are connected. If you are content with the street view, if you are content with this superficial understanding of Jesus and what He has done for you, then your worship is going to be so superficial. But if you dig deeper and you understand the blessings that have been extended to you, then you will be even more transformed, giving more of yourself totally completely in holy to God. This is true worship. This is proper praise. We have to not just make sure it’s revolving around God, we have to revel in it, revel in the work of Christ and what He has done.

Obviously it doesn't stop there. Finally we see that, proper praise rejoices in the certainty of our salvation. Proper praise rejoices in the certainty of our salvation. At the very end of the verse we see that we have been blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. Again, what is this referring to? How have we been blessed in Christ with every spiritual blessing, all of these beautiful things that we have just surveyed, how is that possible, in the heavenly places? What does that mean?

Salvation is certain, because of our location in Jesus Christ, and where is Jesus? Is He still in the grave? Absolutely not. He has come back to life, He is alive, and He is ascended, He is in the heavens. He is seated at the right hand of God. We are in Him, in the heavenlies. And so our salvation is as well. Our salvation is a done deal. It cannot be lost, it cannot be stolen, it is certain because it resides in Christ who sits at the right hand of God in the

heavenlies. Paul will make this clear too in Ephesians 2, “but God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loves us, even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ, by grace you have been saved, and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.”

You know how God views your salvation. It’s not something you are holding on to as tight as you can, “oh I hope I don’t let go.” That’s not how God views your salvation. It’s a done deal. It resides with His son, that is with Him in heaven. It is certain. And you can rejoice in that certainty.

As Paul says in Philippians 3:20, “our citizenship is in heaven and from it we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.” We look forward - we still await that final fulfillment of our salvation when faith turns to sight and we are with God forever. Until then though, we rejoice in the confidence that we can have due to the work of Christ in His location in the heavenly places. This is the certainty that we have and we rejoice in that. With this certainty in mind, we continue to look back and remember Christ’s work on the cross and what He did to even make it come to this point. And that’s where we turn to communion.