

Living in God's blessing...

There is a good foundation for our expectation that God will bless you:

1. The Father's own goodness and love gives us confidence!
2. Because of His great love, He provided a limitless blessing packaged in your salvation, available through faith in Jesus.
3. He gave great assurance of His will to bless by establishing that will in the promises of His Word, a covenant underwritten by the blood of His own Son.
4. He made it possible for you to experience all this great blessing through faith in that covenant Word and friendship with the Holy Spirit.

The promises of God are wonderful, and speak to your whole life -- past, present and future. According to His Word, you can expect something good to happen everywhere in your life!

"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.." Ephesians 1:3

I like the word "*blessed*". One thing I know: it doesn't mean cursed! I can tell that "blessing" means something good! It means God has good in mind for you, not bad! Take note of the word "*every*" in this verse. The blessings must be complete, and they must be many! And, praise God, it says He "*has blessed*"! This means that God has already done it, He's already given all those blessings. You don't have to try to get Him to do it. You can simply receive what He has already given. I also like the word "*us*". I am simple enough to believe that includes me and you. And I really like the words "in Christ". This means the blessing comes to you because you belong to Jesus. It doesn't matter *who* you are; it just matters *where* you are! (*in...Him.*)

Now, about that word "spiritual". "He has blessed us with every *spiritual* blessing..." Frankly, when I was younger I would look at that word and feel a little disappointed. Now, I was not disappointed with what I read in the verses after those words. Wow! The description of these blessings in Ephesians were so wonderful they were beyond my understanding! But they all seemed...well, spiritual. They all seemed so...eternal. I

wondered if these blessings included the other things I was dealing with here on earth: things like finances, health, family, job, goals for my life, etc.

Eternity is the most important thing. Where we spend it, and what we have when we get there, are more important than the few decades we may live on the earth. Let's make sure we are on track for God's blessings for the millions of years yet to come!

The rest of the good news is this: the promises of God are not only for eternity in heaven, but also for here on the earth. Someone said, "I need God, not just for the "sweet bye and bye", but for the "nasty now and now"! Just dig into your Bible. There is a good promise that can be found for any human need.

All those promises can be called spiritual blessings, because they come to us from God who is spirit, by means of His promises which are spiritual, and through the agency of the Holy Spirit. Whether we are talking about eternal life and holiness, or healing, financial help and family problems, God has a provision for us, and it comes to us spiritually. The provision comes through the promises, instruction, and commands in His Word. This Word is spiritual in nature, and so is our relationship with the Holy Spirit. In other words, there is a spiritual blessing already provided for every area of your life!

I suggest to you that God's provision covers everything you need in this life as well as in the next life.

"...His power has granted to us everything pertaining to life and godliness..." Everything. 2 Peter 1:3

Here are some notes on Eph. 1:3 from classic authors:

1. "*who has blessed us*": "The believer is seen as the recipient of all spiritual blessings. Hence he has no need to seek additional blessings from God. He must, instead, appropriate the ones that already have been provided."

Wycliffe Bible Commentary

2. "*with every spiritual blessing*": this is "every possible blessing for time and eternity which the Spirit has to bestow."

Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown

3. *"in the heavenly places"*: "this phrase occurs only in Ephesians. It is found five times - Eph 1:3,20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12. The word *places* is not in the original. Here it denotes the spheres or realms of our association in Christ. We are not yet actually in heaven, but our calling is heavenly; the power for our daily living is heavenly; God's provision is heavenly." Wycliffe Bible Commentary

(over)

Here then is the J. Matthews translation of Eph. 1:3:

"God has already provided for us every needed blessing because we are joined to Christ. These blessings come to us through the Holy Spirit, and are experienced in His presence – the heavenly places."

In simple terms, two things are necessary to live in the lavish and abundant blessings of God:

1. We must know what is available. You probably won't receive something from God that you don't know about, understand, or believe.

2. We must know how to appropriate those blessings. God has provided His blessings, but we will not automatically experience the blessings. God's promises are all dependent on our living in a relationship with Him and with those around us, according to the conditions that He established for those relationships.

...to be continued.