

## A. SPIRITUAL TREASURES

- As believers who are “in Christ,” we possess vast spiritual riches and their value is incomprehensible. Grasping the truth of what is ours will aid us in Learning to Lean!
- These treasures were given in the past and are available for us to access today.
- The Apostle Paul had a deep understanding of how our day-to-day lives can be profoundly impacted by learning of these riches and then accessing them by faith.
- While he was under house arrest in Rome he wrote a letter to the churches. The foundational truths he communicated are greatly needed by every believer.
- Despite its given name, it's believed the epistle of Ephesians was a circular letter intended to go to all the churches. There are no specifics relating to Ephesus in it.
- What it contains is a wealth of truth that enables every child of God to lean into the incredible love and provision of their Father through the Son and by the Spirit: Eph 1:3-14 NLT-- All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms because we are united with Christ. <sup>4</sup>Even before he made the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes. <sup>5</sup>God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure. <sup>6</sup>So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. <sup>7</sup>He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. <sup>8</sup>He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. <sup>9</sup>God has now revealed to us his mysterious will regarding Christ—which is to fulfill his own good plan. <sup>10</sup>And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth. <sup>11</sup>Furthermore, because we are united with Christ, we have received an inheritance from God, for he chose us in advance, and he makes everything work out according to his plan. <sup>12</sup>God's purpose was that we Jews who were the first to trust in Christ would bring praise and glory to God. <sup>13</sup>And now you Gentiles have also heard the truth, the Good News that God saves you. And when you believed in Christ, he identified you as his own by giving you the Holy Spirit, whom he promised long ago. <sup>14</sup>The Spirit is God's guarantee that he will give us the inheritance he promised and that he has purchased us to be his own people. He did this so we would praise and glorify him.
- Internalizing this message will help us set aside our self-reliance and feelings of discontentment and disappointment. Trust, hope and contentment can grow instead.
- Insights:

## B. BLESSED BY THE FATHER

- The passage begins with a doxology (blessing) focused on our heavenly Father. (v. 3)
- The riches described here originate with the Father. They're in the heavenly realm, meaning they're spiritual. They enrich our inner lives occupied by a new nature.
- Being united with Christ means we are privileged to enjoy the infinite spiritual assets of our Father just as Jesus did when He lived as a human here on earth. (v. 3)
- Because these blessings are spiritual in nature, they enable us to effectively combat all the pressures and conflicts that we experience as we seek to follow Jesus.
- Before the world began God made these plans for us because of His great love. (v. 4)
- We are made holy and without fault as a result of being united with Christ. (v. 4) This can be a game-changer in the way relate to God and to ourselves!
- God sees us as holy. "Holy" means that we are inwardly pure because of Jesus. (G40)
- We need never fear losing our good standing with the Father because we are made eternally "blameless." (G299) This word means we are faultless and unblameable:
  - Rom 8:1 NLT--So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.
  - Rom 8:33 AMP--Who will bring any charge against God's elect (His chosen ones)? It is God who justifies us [declaring us blameless and putting us in a right relationship with Himself].
- LISTENING EXERCISE:  
*How often do you entertain accusing or condemning thoughts?*

*How does it impact you to see in Scripture that God does not condemn you?*

*Can you declare with confidence, "I am holy and blameless in God's eyes"?*

- Let's practice that faith statement throughout the week. Speaking and meditating on the truth will allow the truth to penetrate to a deeper place in your being.
- Insights:

## C. RECEIVING GOD'S FULLNESS

- The gift of being made holy in Christ brings restoration. We grow in wholeness because we are fulfilling the Father's original intent for us.

- Knowing and receiving God's blessings puts us on the path to healthy functioning. Our right relationship with Him allows us to lean on Him more and more.
- Internalizing the Father's love is particularly powerful as we pursue growth and wholeness because it meets our core needs and heals those needs left unmet.
- We were created to be loved, secure and to enjoy connection. Paul wanted us to know that God sees us and knows us and that we truly belong! (vv. 3-6):
  - God chose us before He even made the world.
  - He has adopted us into His family.
  - He wants us near Him.
  - We bring Him great pleasure.
  - We belong to God and He belongs to us!
- How do we apply this tremendous truth about God's lavish love? We apply it to the places that need it the most! Lam 3:19–26 AMP-- Remember [O Lord] my affliction and my wandering, the wormwood and the gall (bitterness). My soul *continually* remembers them and is bowed down within me. But this I call to mind, therefore I have hope. It is because of the Lord's lovingkindnesses that we are not consumed, because His [tender] compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great *and* beyond measure is Your faithfulness. "The Lord is my portion *and* my inheritance," says my soul; therefore I have hope in Him *and* wait expectantly for Him." The Lord is good to those who wait [confidently] for Him, to those who seek Him [on the authority of God's word]. It is good that one waits quietly for the salvation of the Lord.
- LISTENING EXERCISE:  
*Take a moment to consider how fully satisfied you feel regarding each core need. Record your insights in the space provided:*
  - *The need to be seen*
  
  - *The need to be known*
  
  - *The need to belong*
- In today's text, Paul made specific reference to the 3 Persons of the Trinity and the important parts that each played. They functioned as a united, integrated whole.
- We're designed for every aspect of our beings to function in an integrated way, too:
  - Ps 86:11 MSG— Put me together, one heart and mind; then, undivided, I'll worship in joyful fear.
  - Jn 17:21 AMP-- I in them and You in Me, in order that they may become one *and* perfectly united, that the world may know *and* [definitely] recognize that You sent Me and that You have loved them [even] as You have loved Me.
  - Jn 17:17 JBP— Make them holy by the truth; for your word is the truth.
- We want our hearts and heads to be in agreement. We also want our past and present selves to find resolution and be in harmony with God's truth: Mt 19:14 ESV-- Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven."

- Knowing the generous love of the Father deeply in our hearts will free us from our deepest fears and disappointments. His love will quiet lies about identity, scarcity, and being alone: John 8:31-32 NIV-- "If you continue in My word, *then* you are truly disciples of Mine; and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free."
- Insights:

## PERSONAL APPLICATION

### A. ONE THING

The One Thing that I'd like to take away from today's class and believe God to accomplish in my life is:

### B. PONDER THE TRUTH

- Which verse stood out to you this week? Write it out below and take some time to review it often. Be still and expectant in God's presence, alert for new insights. Write them down.

### C. PRAY IT IN

Take your One Thing and your verse and turn them into a prayer:

*"Lord, where do You want to apply these truths to my particular life circumstances?"*

*"What are some specific strategies for incorporating this truth into my thinking and actions?"*

**D. PRAISE IT IN**

- Use music to help you engage your emotions. It will assist you in taking the truth from your head to your heart.

**E. PERSONALIZE IT**

Prayerfully consider these questions, asking the Spirit to guide you into a deeper understanding of the truth and to reveal His pathway for growth. Keep a written record.

**Spiritual Treasures**

- Read Ephesians 1:3-14 several times this week just to get a grasp of God's largesse. He has set before you an amazing opportunity to leave behind scarcity and embrace His riches. Thoughts:
  - Personally benefit from the many blessings that God has bestowed on you by applying them to your current life circumstances. Use the handout "Tools & Techniques: Spiritual Blessings" this week to combat the noise, lies, pressure and discontentment you may be encountering.
  - Return to the blessing or promise that ministers to where you need it the most. Meditate on it, pray it back to God, and verbalize God's truth through faith statements and singing.
  - What kind of impact have they had on your sense of hope and contentment?
  - How have they impacted your relationship with Jesus?

### Blessed by The Father

- Reflect on God's love and intentionality toward you personally. How does it change the way you view God? How does it change the way you see yourself?
  
- Rehearse the truth: "I am holy and blameless in God's eyes." Ask the Spirit to catch you every time you entertain an accusing or condemning thought and to apply this truth. Take note of what happens in your thoughts and feelings.
  
- Which of these needs is most satisfied in your life? Of which are you most needful? Ask the Spirit to reveal memories from the past or current situations where they were not fully met:
  - *The need to be seen*
  
  - *The need to be known*
  
  - *The need to belong*
  
- Invite God to minister to your unmet needs using Listening Prayer. Follow 4 basic steps:
  1. *"Help me, Father, identify my most predominant feelings around this situation:"*  
Get in touch with these emotions and be present to them as you come to God in prayer.
  2. *"Lord, please bring to your mind a time when I felt these same feelings."* It can be a:
    - Specific memory
    - Environment that you experienced over and over in the past
    - Symbolic mental picture
    - Persistent feelings with no memory attached
  3. *"Holy Spirit, I ask you to show me what is the message I came to believe at this time?"*
  4. *"Jesus, what is the truth here?"*
  
- Come back again and again to the truths you're learning. Continue in it until your triggers diminish in power and your heart grows more and more full of God's love.