

**To the Saints at Kossuth Street . . . Be a worshipping community!**

Ephesians 1:8-14

September 12, 2010

**Intro.** Where do feelings for God come from? Where do your feelings for God come from? What causes you to have any kind of feelings for God?

Central to the mission of the church of Jesus Christ is our heart-felt responsiveness to the one true God and his gracious intervention in our lives. A gospel that rests heavily on our minds that has not transformed the desires of our hearts and initiated growing affections for God is not the genuine gospel of scripture. A person unmoved at the core of his being by the delights of God's work on his behalf is a person who does not know God. This is the essential point of the first half of Ephesians 1. God's people are those who break out in affectionate blessing of God in intelligent response to all that he has done for them in Christ Jesus, by his Spirit, according to his will and by his enormous grace.

Consider for example a few well known Psalms.

*Bless the LORD, O my soul, and all that is within me, bless his holy name!  
Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits,  
who forgives all your iniquity, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit,  
who crowns you with steadfast love and mercy . . . 103:1-4*

*Oh give thanks to the LORD; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!  
Sing to him, sing praises to him; tell of all his wondrous works! 105:1-2*

To bless God as we are commanded in Ephesians 1:3, means expressing a felt response to God called forth by an understanding of the nature of God and his active grace towards us. Where there is no understanding, reflection or knowledge of the truth about God, there will not be any affections for God regardless of how much emotion is present.

The scriptures are not shy or unclear in describing the expected responses and behavior of people who know and love God . . . delight, rejoice, gladness, singing, magnify, tell, bless, seek, love, praise, thanks, shout, pour out your heart are all terms used to shape and describe the response of people who know and have experienced God's great love. True God honoring affections and praise come as a willful response to a mindful understanding of God from his word, by his Spirit.

This careful consideration of truth as the generating agent for affections is a key distinctive that protects us from counterfeit, subjective and overly personal enthusiastic responses to God that often hide the shallow self focus of our lives. Enthusiasm and passion have their places, but are not to be used as substitutes for a life response to the living God.

Read Ephesians 1:3-14

This letter from the Apostle to the saints at Kossuth Street begins with an outburst of praise to God with the direct implication that this is both a core value and distinctive mark of faithful saints in Christ Jesus. Verse 4 begins with 'even as', which essentially means that now the blessings that God has blessed us with will be amplified and explained. In these verses for our study today and next Lord's Day are 5 foundational truths about God's saving love for you that as the hymn writer says . . . should tune your heart to sing his praise.

The answer to our question of where do feelings for God come from is found in this passage. Feelings for God are found in and expressed because of these truths that describe what God has done and is doing for you in Christ Jesus. Worship, your affectionate response to God, begins in some hard to reach places. Let's review 3 truths that produce affectionate, genuine praise from the heart before we examine 2 final truths from this call to worship.

**1. God chose us in him . . .**

**1:4**

Affectionate worship begins in eternity past with God's choice.

The scriptures teach the astounding truth that 'believing saints in Christ Jesus' are what they are because God chose them and determined to save them. If you are a genuine Christian, it is because God set his love on you in eternity past. God's choice of you to be his child is one truth that feeds the flame of affection for him. What positive, undeniable evidence do you have that God has been and is at work completing what he began before the creation of the world? Cmp. Rom. 11:33-36

**2. God predestined us for adoption . . .**

**1:5-6**

Expressive delight in God flows from understanding adoption.

Motivated by love for you, God took the initiative to set you aside for the specific purpose of becoming his son. Adoption is a permanent relationship of intimacy with God the Father. It is a change of status. Your identity has changed . . . from slaves to sons. Your inheritance has changed . . . from damnation to glory. You are a son of God with all the privileges and rights of a legal son. Compared to being a son of disobedience, a child of wrath, alienated, an enemy and separated from Christ . . . adopted to sonship is something to consider valuable and respond to with expressive delight. Cmp. 1John 3:1-3

**3. In Christ we have redemption . . .**

**1:7-8**

Singing to God is launched at the cross with the provision of redemption.

Redemption carries both the idea of being set free from slavery and the price paid to gain that freedom. The OT speaks of redemption in terms of the release of slaves and the deliverance of God's people out of Egypt. Understanding that your enslavement to sin was real. Appreciating the violent death of Jesus that paid the price for your freedom. Reviewing the meaning of forgiveness. Heb. 8:12 I will remember their sins no more. Acknowledging that you have been bought, you are not your own.

**4. God makes known to us his will . . .**

**1:9-10**

Blessing God is stirred by understanding that Christ is the main point of everything.

God intends that we understand his saving purposes in Christ. The Apostle uses the term 'mystery' 21 times in his writings to point out that God's plan has been and is being progressively revealed. What God is doing, what will come to pass and what the unknown future holds is all included in this concept of mystery. God's purposes have been revealed and made known to us. What has been a mystery and hidden from many is known to us. Bless God . . . 3 key questions you can answer with confidence . . .

What is God's plan?

Unite all things in and under Christ.

The mystery, what he willed . . . his purpose which he set forth in Christ/unite all things  
Rupture/dislocation of 2:1-3 and Col. 1:21 reunited and centered in Christ

How is God accomplishing his plan? Powerful grace in all realms – heaven and earth.

Through the church/gospel - rulers & authorities in heavens and people 'far off' on earth  
Eph.3:7ff

When will God's plan be completed? The fullness of time – by God's schedule.

Gal. 4:4 – at just the right time. 2Peter 3:8

Romans 16:25-27 to the only wise God be glory!

**5. God assures us that our inheritance is secure. 1:11-14**

Praise is generated by the Holy Spirit who is your guarantee of inheritance.

This blessing revolves around the basic truth stated in verse 14 that when you believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit. The presence of the Holy Spirit in your life is the assurance that God started and will complete a work in your life all the way through to becoming his special possession in glory.

Rom.8:16                      John 3:8                      John 16:8-11                      1Cor. 2:12-14

Here are five truths mentioned in this blessing that God accomplishes through the work of the Holy Spirit . . . reflect and rejoice . . . especially if you recognize these realities in your life.

- God calls those he has chosen.                      11a  
Effectual call . . . Holy Spirit applies the gift of election.                      John 16:8-11
- God gives you present hope in Christ.    12  
First to hope                      for Christ's glory
- God removes all divisions in Christ.                      11-13  
We – 11,12 – Jews                      you also – 13                      division, distrust, hatred 2:15-16
- God opens your eyes to the scriptures.                      13  
Col. 1:5                      1Cor. 2:12-14                      Rom. 10:14-17
- God marks you with a seal and leaves a deposit.                      13-14  
Believed/sealed – reception, presence of Holy Spirit in believers  
Deposit/down payment – a small foretaste                      2Cor.1:22

Eph. 3:20-21

1. God chose us in him . . .	You are on purpose	1:4
2. God predestined us for adoption . . .	You belong	1:5-6
3. In Christ we have redemption . . .	You are forgiven	1:7-8
4. God makes known to us his will . . .	You know God's plan	1:9-10
5. God assures us that our inheritance is secure.	You have assurance	1:11-14

### Lord, I am listening and examining my heart . . .

1. For a new sense of reality. My heart is drawn to unseen spiritual reality in Christ.
2. For an awareness of personal insufficiency. I am convinced my salvation is all of God.
3. For a new taste for God's beauty. I appreciate God's goodness and moral excellencies.
4. For a pure love for God. I love him for who he is not just for what he has done. No pay back required.
5. For a growing behavior of holiness. The purpose of God's electing love in my life is to reflect him in blamelessness and holiness.

### Study Questions

1. Read Ephesians 1:1-14 together. Note/mention any repeated terms or themes. Note any questions you would like to ask for clarification or better understanding.
2. What is an affection for God? Can you produce feelings of love or respect for God on your own? Discuss/evaluate the following statements from the introduction of the sermon . . .

*To bless God as we are commanded in Ephesians 1:3, means expressing a felt response to God called forth by an understanding of the nature of God and his active grace towards us.*

*Where there is no understanding, reflection or knowledge of the truth about God, there will not be any affections for God regardless of how much emotion is present.*

3. How do the concepts of response and reflection fit into an application of Ephesians 1:3-14 in your life? What do you respond to and what do you reflect on? What applications can you draw from this regarding the use of your time, time in the word, Bible study, ect?
4. Review and discuss each of the five truths and agree on a core truth or principle from each. Evaluate your responses . . . are they more in the form of questions, glad to be informed, I believe that or affection toward God?
5. Look over the 5 responses or marks of spiritual affections in the 'Lord I am listening' section at the conclusion. Share your what responses you are familiar with in your life and what ones you have not seen much evidence of.
6. Pray together and for each other, asking God to transform your hearts for his glory as you seek to understand him and spend time reflecting on his truth.