

Dear Heavenly Father,

Praise

Paul said that you are “able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us” (Eph 3:20). I praise you today for the wonderful power of your grace that is even now working in my life. You have raised me up with Christ and seated me with him in the heavenly places, so that in the coming ages you might show the immeasurable riches of your grace toward me in Christ Jesus (Eph 2:6–7). Praise the Lord!

Today in Your Word

Today you shared with me the first half of Paul’s letter to the church in Ephesus. This letter is the second of what are known as the “Prison Epistles,” so named because they were written during Paul’s imprisonment in Rome. Paul’s letter to the Ephesians was written to remind them of their new identity in Christ and to exhort them to walk worthy of their high and holy calling. The emphasis in today’s reading is on what you are doing through your Son in the Church by your Spirit. Paul began by praising you for all the blessings you have given the saints in Christ. Before you created the world, you sovereignly and graciously chose (elected) your Son to be the one through whom the world would be saved (Eph 1:4). This teaches me that election is Christocentric, that is, election is realized and centered “in Christ.” You also determined (predestined) that all who repent of their sins and believe in Christ would be spiritually united with him and adopted as your sons (Eph 1:5). This teaches me that my election is both corporate and conditional. It is corporate in the sense that my status as elect comes only from being united by faith with Christ. I am elect because I am “in Him,” the elect One. It is conditional in the sense that my election is based on my response to your gracious call and my obedience to your requirements of faith and repentance. This means that no one is predestined to be saved or lost. Rather, all men are called to believe in Christ (Matt 22:14) and those who “continue in the faith, stable and steadfast, not shifting from the hope of the gospel” shall be saved (Col 1:22–23). You also seal all who believe with your promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of the saints’ inheritance (Eph 1:13–14). This teaches me that your Spirit is the one who applies the redemption which you planned and the Son provided. Paul went on to say that everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, must place their faith in Jesus Christ for salvation. When they do, they are raised from death to spiritual life and are made “alive together with Christ” (Eph 2:5). This teaches me that Christ’s body, the church, is made up of all those who are “in Christ.” Through his sacrifice, he broke down the “dividing wall of hostility” that existed between Jews and Gentiles (cf. Exod 12:48; Deut 7:1–6; 23:3–8) and created in himself “one new man in place of the two, so making peace” (Eph 2:14–15). This wonderful truth is the mystery of Christ, that “the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel” (Eph 3:6). Paul rejoiced in the fact that you had given him insight into this truth and made him a steward of your grace to the Gentiles. Through the church your wisdom is now being made known “to the rulers and authorities in heavenly places” (Eph 3:10). How amazing to think of what you have done for me in Christ! Hallelujah!

Reflection

Paul said that I have been saved by grace through faith, not as a result of works (for faith is not a work). Yet he also said that I was “created in Christ Jesus *for good works*” (Eph 2:8–10). Am I demonstrating my faith by obeying your commands and doing good works in your name? (cf. James 2:17–26).

Request

Father, I ask that you would strengthen me with power through your Spirit in the inner man, so that Christ may dwell in my heart through faith. Help me to be rooted and grounded in your love, which is so vast that I need your strength to comprehend it. Enable me to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge, that I may be filled with all your fullness! (Eph 3:16–19).

Thanksgiving

Thank you for blessing me in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places (Eph 1:3). I’m so grateful for the riches of your grace which you have lavished upon me! (Eph 1:7–8).

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

Suggested Hymn: “I’m Sitting with Jesus” – Daniel S. Warner.

Meditation Verse: Ephesians 2:8.