

- **Introduction**

Last week, we bought a piece of IKEA furniture. Not the first time. And probably not the last time. It was a little book case. And inside the cardboard box were some white panels, some instructions, some screws, and a little bendy Allan key. We followed the instructions, and used the bendy Allan key to screw it all together. And it turned into a cupboard.

Last week, I cooked a meal for my family. I also drove somewhere I had never been. I went to work. I watched TV.

Every week we do stuff like this.

And today, there are people at IKEA buying cupboards with bendy Allan keys. There are people cooking. People driving. People working. If you go across the road to the hospital, you can find people being born, people dying, people sick, people recovering. Go down the hill and you'll find people shopping, and people working and people eating, people trying on new shoes and people watching movies.

There are people playing sport, people watching sport, people buying cars, building houses, exercising, flying in planes on holidays.

Everyday, people are doing these mundane everyday things. But for us, what is it all about? What is our purpose? Verse 1:

- *1Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus...*

Ephesians is a letter from Paul, an apostle – a man sent by Jesus, with the authority of Jesus, with a message from God. Written to God's holy people, the faithful in Christ Jesus. And there is our purpose. There is our life. There is our identity.

- **To be God's holy people.**

You see, "God's holy people" means "People set apart for God." We are set apart for God, for him, for his purposes. This is who we are.

Throughout our lives, we will do what many people do – we will do the mundane things. We will shop and cook and go to school, we will work, buy cars and houses and

play sport and watch TV and movies and buy shoes, and maybe even build furniture with a bendy Allan key. We have all been born and we will all die and in between we will get sick and well and sick and well. But THIS, what Paul writes here in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 1, this is it for us...

To **be** God's holy people. To **be** the faithful in Christ Jesus. To **be** set apart for Him.

And with that backdrop, Paul launches into a rolling speech of praise to God. And today, I just want to draw out 3 things from verses 3-14, to help us understand our place in this world as God's holy people.

- **(Slide)**
 1. He has **blessed** us in the heavenly realms.
 2. He has **redeemed** us for a purpose.
 3. He has **marked** us with the Holy Spirit.
- **1. Verse 3: He has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.**

What God has done is this: He has lifted us out of the mundane and into the eternal. He has blessed us spiritually. He has offered us existence and participation and fulfillment and purpose in the spiritual heavenly realms. We have been given a spiritual perspective on life.

- **III** – When I was a child, there were no baby seats. So when I sat in the car, a little Morris Major, I couldn't see out the window at all. Car trips were really mundane. All I could see was the back of a seat.

When I got older, I could see out the window. I could see the side of the road, the road in front. I could see where we were going. My perspective had changed.

God lifts us up out of the mundane world and gives us a heavenly place with spiritual blessings. He lifts us out of worldliness and offers us an eternal, spiritual seat with him. And as God's holy people, set apart for him, that is how we are to live. We are to live with that heavenly, spiritual perspective. We are not to find our purpose in worldly things, but in spiritual things.

So what is our spiritual purpose?

- **2. Verse 7: He has redeemed us for a purpose.**
- *7In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins,*

God redeemed us through the blood of Jesus. He redeemed us. He "bought" us.

- **III** – You know those petrol vouchers you get? 4 cents or 8 cents off petrol? So you hand in the voucher and you get the discount. That's redemption. With that

voucher, you redeem the 4 cents per litre. You get a few dollars back. That's redemption. Buying back.

So what did God redeem us from?

He redeemed us from **sin** and **death**. In other words, sin and death OWNED us. To use the language of the day, we were **slaves** to sin and death. And God bought us out of slavery. And to do that he paid the price FOR OUR SIN with the death of Jesus on the cross.

And THEN, he gave us wisdom and understanding to know the mystery of his will.

Verse 9:

- *9he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ.*

God's purpose is to unite everything in heaven and on earth under Jesus. And that includes actually bringing heaven and earth **together** under him. That's what God is working towards. That is his mystery. Heaven and earth will be united. When the times reach their fulfillment, when Jesus returns, under God's plan and God's timing, we will see everything united under Jesus.

And that's what we're waiting for.

So that changes the way we live. We don't live for money or power or property or fame or the things of this world. We don't live for sport or education or food or IKEA and bendy Allan keys. We live for **that day** when we will see all things united under Jesus.

But until that day, what happens?

- **3. Verse 13: He has marked us.**

*When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14**who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance*

He has marked us.

- **III** – At my high school, we had cows. And every cow was marked with a brand. A hot iron sears into the cow's flesh, leaving an impression that cannot be removed. People also did it to their slaves. They would brand their slaves with a mark that could not be removed.

God marks his people. He marks them as **his**. And how does he mark us? With the Holy Spirit. God himself **lives in us** by His Holy Spirit. He is the **guarantee** of our inheritance. He is the mark that we **belong** to him.

- **From slavery to slavery**

It is a mark of slavery. Of ownership. We are redeemed from **slavery to sin and death** to be **slaves to God**. From being slaves of destruction to being slaves of eternal life.

And this is the point Paul makes again and again in his writing. We are all slaves to something, to someone. We are all owned. Either by sin and death, or by God. We are either slaves to the world... or slaves to God.

Are you a slave to the world? A slave to your money, your work, even your family, your career or are you a slave to things like jealousy or envy or lust or greed? Are you a slave to the world of sin and death?

Or are you a slave to God? Are you God's "possession", with the guarantee of eternal life? If we are his possessions, his precious possessions, his children, we are committed to his purposes. We bear his seal – the Holy Spirit. We bear the family resemblance.

- **A family resemblance**

III – I always find it funny when people look at kids and look at their parents and say "His got your nose", or "His got your eyes". No one ever says: "He's got your nostril hair" or "he's got your drooling habit".

But when people look at us as children of God, marked by the Holy Spirit, then people should see the **family resemblance**. You've got the humility of Jesus. You've got your Father's love. You've got the patience of the Son.

This is who we are. This is our identity. This is our mark, our seal, our purpose. To resemble our master, Jesus. And to live for the praise of his glory.

The message of Ephesians is all about verse 12:

- *That we might **be** for the praise of his glory*

That we might **exist** to praise him. That all we do brings praise to him. The way we work. The way we cook for our family. The way we treat others. The way we forgive. The way we love and have patience.

You see, we are different. We have been lifted above the window ledge. We can see out and see the future that God has planned. We can see his purposes. We HAVE the Holy Spirit, God at work IN US. **And so we cannot go on living for worldly things.**

We will build our IKEA furniture with bendy Allan keys. We will cook meals and drive places and go to work. But that is not our purpose. That is not our identity. Our life is in serving him.

- **Whose slave are you?**

We are not to be slaves to this culture. But slaves to Jesus culture. Not slaves to our mortgage, or even our family, not slaves to sport or education. Not slaves to food or money. We are slaves to Jesus. We MUST, for the glory of Jesus, LET GO of the slavery we have to the **things** of this world. You can HAVE them, but they must not HAVE YOU, for you belong to Jesus.

Let's pray.

Ephesians 1:1-14

1Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, To God's holy people in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus: **2**Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

3Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ. **4**For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In love **5**he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will— **6**to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. **7**In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace **8**that he lavished on us. With all wisdom and understanding, **9**he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, **10**to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment—to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. **11**In him we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will, **12**in order that we, who were the first to put our hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory. **13**And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, **14**who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.