

Boundless Gratitude

by Peter Masters

The book of Ephesians is a letter from the Apostle Paul to the church in Ephesus, emphasizing the church's nature, its relationship with God, and the believer's union with Christ.

Duration: 47:13

Scripture: Ephesians 1:3-5, Ephesians 1:11, Ephesians 1:13-14

Topics: "Divine Salvation", "Eternal Adoption"

Description

This sermon delves into the boundless gratitude we should have towards God, focusing on the predestination of believers, the concept of adoption into God's family, and the impartation of Christ's likeness to His children. It emphasizes the divine work in salvation, the call to holiness, and the privilege of being part of God's eternal family.

Transcript

The subject from the verses in at least the first half of this first chapter of Ephesians will be that of boundless gratitude. This is an amazing, an astonishing, an exhilarating, a rhapsodic passage of Holy Scripture. It is the inspired word of God given through the apostle Paul.

We begin, God willing, with a new series in this remarkable letter, a letter to our souls. A prison epistle written by Paul from Rome in the year A.D. 60 to A.D. 62, sometime between those years. Like the letter to the Philippians, to the Colossians, and to Philemon, it is one of the great prison epistles.

The gospel had been taken to Ephesus by that remarkable couple Aquila and Priscilla, at a small church, had been founded. It was the largest trading port in the Roman province of Asia. On the Aegean sea shore, you know that the temple to the goddess Artemis, Diana, just northeast of the city, was one of the wonders, the seven wonders of the ancient world.

And the theater within the city, much of which remains to this day, the theater seated no fewer than 24,000 people. And that was the great theater into which some of Paul's fellow laborers were dragged by a screaming, angry mob. It was a university city, one of the great seats of learning at the time.

Paul went there on his third missionary journey, and we read all about it in the book of Acts, the Acts of the Apostles, chapter 19. He was there for almost three years as evangelist and as pastor. And when he left, he was succeeded by Timothy for some time, some unspecified time, between one and two years.

It was a wonderful church, but it was a church that was afflicted with error. People came into it, grew up in it, very fluent people who began to preach fables of their own invention, a great shame, a great pity. And then there were those who preached works, salvation by works, Judaizers they are called in some places.

And they were rather extreme people, some gnostically inclined people who had very strange teachings, forbidding people to marry, proclaiming celibacy as being alone, pleasing to God, forbidding a certain range of foodstuffs and all this type of thing. So the church needed exhortation and deliverance from time to time. Sadly, by the time of the book of Revelation, we find that it is Ephesus that had left her first love.

Sound still, well largely so anyway, and worshipping correctly, and yet hearts not warm as they once had been to the Lord. Yet overall, it was a grand church. And this epistle, this prison epistle, is really quite wonderful in its structure.

It is, the first part of it, doctrinal, great teachings of grace, tremendous, why there is so much for us to learn, and so many wonderful things. And then the second part of it is application, conduct, behaviour for Christians. So it has that perfect balance, the doctrine, the application, as you go through.

It speaks much of grace, the wonders of grace and the doctrines of grace. It speaks much of Jew and Gentile. Now together, some people even to this day, and many good Bible believers, they don't understand this.

They think there are Jews, and why now? They're away from God, and one day God will bring back the Jews, and they'll have a very special place. Well there may be a great revival among Jews, but the effect will be to bring them into the Christian church. Because now Jew and Gentile, as this epistle explains very powerfully, are one.

One Zion, God makes no distinction. Jews who are converted, Gentiles who are converted, we are the one church of Jesus Christ. And all those novel complexities about somehow Jews being very special, and there being a system of Jews first, Gentiles second.

Dear friends, these are complexities that are imposed on the word of God, maybe by well-meaning people. But the truth is much grander and simpler. Now the New Testament International Church of Jesus Christ, Jews and Gentiles together, we are the people of God, without doubt.

And then this epistle has much in it, as you well know, about the Christian warfare. And how we need to be aware we're in a warfare, and the devil is trying to tear us down, and bring us down. But if he cannot cause us to lose our salvation, he thinks he can achieve that.

We know he can't. But even though he cannot take away our salvation, he can take away our joy and peace in believing. Our service for the Lord, our effectiveness.

What a tragedy, what a shame, and we have to fight against him in the Christian warfare. He can take away our assurance, all kinds of things, if we let him. And here is the precious, priceless instruction on how to conduct ourselves in that warfare with the enemy of our souls.

So it's a great epistle. Friends, let's look at it, as many verses as we can. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ, by the will of God.

Paul, an apostle. You know that apostle means simply messenger. So, and the Word of God does this occasionally, the term apostle is used of somebody who was not a member, either of the twelve, without Judas, the eleven, and one made up, to occupy the space.

No doubt by the leading and inspiration of God. Plus the apostle Paul, the one person who was an apostle who had not been with the Lord. The one born out of due time, and the last to see the Lord, and to be called by him.

Well, sometimes the term apostle is used of those who were not in that special circle. And it's used in its literal sense, a messenger, an evangelist. We don't use it, or we shouldn't use it that way today, to avoid confusion.

But Paul was more than just a messenger. He was a special representative, called personally by Jesus Christ. And called to teach truth, to be a channel of revelation, to write scripture, and of course to establish the church.

Paul, even in his conduct, was a God-inspired given example. Follow me, he says. He doesn't say it arrogantly.

God has given him, revealed to him, it isn't his wisdom, exactly how the church should be governed, how it ought to be organized, how you should conduct yourself as a believer. And so under inspiration, he says to the people, be imitators, close followers of me. So not only his word, his truth, but also the methods that he employed and adopted, are a pattern for all the church subsequently, until Christ shall come again.

So he's an apostle, just like the twelve. And here he means it in that special sense. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ.

By the will of God, we note, he didn't decide to be an apostle himself. Just like the eleven, after the parting of Judas, he was especially commissioned by the Lord. But separately, the only one who was added to that celebrated company.

By the will of God. He wasn't like a pastor, who is recognized and appointed by the church. Or a deacon, or an elder.

No, the church didn't appoint Paul either. God appointed him. He was one of that special band who have now passed.

Now that the scriptures are given, and the church has been founded. And then the first verse reads, to the saints. That means literally, those who are set apart for God.

That's so important. We are saints if we're saved. Set apart.

Taken out of the world. We're not of the world. We don't resemble the world.

We're trying to reach people in the world, and bring them out to the gospel of Christ. And to salvation. It is an astonishing thing today, that many people who say they are born again.

Do not seem to be set apart. They carry on as though they were in the world. In every way.

And they behave just like worldlings. And there are even churches. And the whole church behaves as though it's some institution which is worldly.

In every way. But right at the beginning of the epistle, how are we addressed? To the saints. To the called out, set apart ones.

Who are different. And the world should not be in our hearts anymore. And we belong to Christ.

We're set apart for him. Even if we're scorned. Even if we're derided.

We're set apart for him. To the saints, which are at Ephesus. And to the faithful.

Which means here, not so much to the loyal. Which it rather sounds like. But to those who have faith in Christ Jesus.

And yet, it means more. To the faithful in Christ Jesus. The reason the translators do not translate it.

Those who have faith. Is then, the next term on the end of the verse. Would read wrongly.

It would read, those who have faith in Christ Jesus. But what the verse means is this. To the faithful, to those who have faith.

Who are in Christ Jesus. It is true we have faith in Christ Jesus. But the apostle says to those who have faith.

And are in Christ Jesus. As it were, plugged into him. Under his wing.

We have communion with God. And a relationship with him. And we have it.

Because we're in Christ. In so far as we're in relationship with him. And he is our saviour.

And he has died for us. And we trust in his work and his merits. Only on those grounds, do we have union with God.

So, we are the set apart ones. Who have faith. But because of that, we are in Christ Jesus.

And our standing depends upon our having a vital relationship with him. He secures it for us. Well friends, look down to the second verse.

Grace be to you and peace from God our father. And from the Lord Jesus Christ. Even this verse, you must give some explanation to.

What wonderful words. Grace be to you. The apostle can say this.

Because he is an apostle. He is speaking under inspiration of the spirit of God. This is God's word.

God is saying to the Ephesians. And to all sincere Christians. Grace be to you.

May my undeserved favour continue with you. And peace, communion with myself. And every good spiritual thing will continue with you.

Now, I cannot say this to you. I cannot say grace to you and peace. If I say to you, God bless you.

Well that is a desire for you. I hope. I say it genuinely.

That is a prayer and a desire. I cannot dispense it. Only God can dispense his blessing.

So when we say to each other, God bless you. We mean, may God bless you. But an apostle who is speaking God's word.

Can say, grace be to you. And peace. It is an expression of God's good will.

Towards his people. And we live under that good will. How much we owe to him.

And we must serve him. And keep ourselves untainted from the world. Because God's will is to give us continued undeserved favour.

And love. And peace. And communion.

And blessing. So this greeting isn't just a greeting. It is God's intention.

Expressed through an inspired apostle. Grace be to you and peace. From God our Father.

And from the Lord Jesus Christ. This is repeated again. And I will deal with it later.

So I am going to go straight in to verse three. These most unusual words. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

First before I look at the blessed be. Look at these words. The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

That's cumbersome. But it's intentional. Supposing I ask.

What do I know about the Father? The apostle Paul is going to worship and praise. First of all the Father. He's going to go on to the Son.

But he's going to praise the Father. And give blessing and dedication to him. But we may say it's difficult to do that.

Because he's invisible to us. We don't know him. So the apostle says yes.

But he's the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So we do know him after all. He's revealed himself in Christ.

Christ has come. And he's come with a heart of compassion. And he's come to make an atonement.

And he's come out of love for his people. And he's spoken so tenderly to his people. And after his death he rose again.

And came straight back to his people. And blessed them and warmed their hearts. And established them and confirmed them.

When you see all the character and the warmth. And the love and the sacrifice and the compassion of Christ. You've seen the Father.

Whoever's seen me, said Christ, has seen the Father. So that's why the apostle Paul says, Blessed be God. Don't you know about him? He's the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

They are both God. Although they take this father-son relationship for our benefit. Actually they're equal.

They're one God. Equal. Different members of the one sublime Godhead.

Equally divine. Equally eternal. One remains invisible to us.

As does the Holy Spirit. There are three in that glorious person of the Godhead. But Christ has become visible to us.

And so we've seen a member of the Godhead. And we've seen the Father. Blessed be God.

And the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. So we know him. It may seem cumbersome.

But there's a reason for the length of the description. But look at this blessed be. And we must just briefly understand this.

What does it mean? Is it an alternative word for praise? Is that all it means? Praise be to God. Is that all that the apostle says? Why choose this word, this term? Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Well there is a slight difference.

And it's a very important difference. The blessed be is translated from a Greek word. Which we have in the English language.

It's a little different in form. But we have the noun say eulogy. And that is exactly the same term that is used here.

So blessed be means to think well of. But it's different from praise in this way. It's to think well of actively or with some substance.

Now for instance. It's quite simple really. I praise God.

I worship him. I give thanks to him. So I praise him.

But when I say blessed be God. I am doing something almost like giving a blessing to God. But how can I do that? How can I add to him? How can I bless him? Well I can return his love.

Think of it like this. I pray for something. Some great need.

The help of God. I pray for it. And God helps me.

And I am able to accomplish something. I know I couldn't have done it without his help. So I immediately return to him the glory and the praise and the thanks.

And if I should talk to somebody or you should talk to someone. And that conversation is used by God in answer to our prayer. To bring that person to salvation.

I don't say I did that. I must have been conspicuously elegant. I must have put the case for the savior effectively and powerfully.

I say no, no. I return thanks to God. And I praise him.

And I give him the glory and the credit. And I return the blessing to him in praise. And in dedication of myself.

As I praise him I give myself. I make pledges and promises. I give him the glory, the credit.

And I trust him and I do his work. Lord I praise thee. Help me in thy service.

Give me a task to do. Enable me to do it. So praise is certainly to recognize God's greatness and goodness.

And thank him and glory him. But to say blessed be is to return something to God that he's given. It's slightly more tangible.

And what is returned here is tremendous thanksgiving. And this chapter will be crammed with things which stir your heart to give thanks and praise to him. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

And here the list immediately starts. Who hath blessed us? And we're going to return the blessing in various ways. Who hath blessed us? That's significant.

He has blessed you. He has in the past blessed you with blessings you haven't yet received. You've received perhaps the greatest blessings in some way.

Pardon and forgiveness. Light and understanding. Conversion and new nature.

But through your Christian life there were more blessings to come. And yet they all are rooted in the past. Who hath blessed us? And the apostle's going to go on to explain.

He blessed you in eternity past when he determined to save you. And he planned your life. And he planned all the ways in which he'd answer your prayers.

And everything he'd ever do to you. And then to finally take you home to glory. All that was decreed and determined in the heart of God.

In his heart of love. Before the world was even begun. So the apostle under inspiration is able to say.

Who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings. In heavenly places. Literally in the Greek.

In the heavenlies. In Christ. And the term in Christ is going to return repeatedly.

Spiritual blessings. Heaven. Salvation.

Light and understanding. Oh. Character.

So many things. God has blessed us with. And of course supremely communion with himself.

Blessings which both come from heaven. And have heaven in view. How do you live your life friend? You've been blessed with all spiritual blessings.

In the heavenlies. Even now as a Christian. The great thing about you.

Is that your foundation is in heaven. Your anchor is in heaven. Every step of your life has reference to heaven.

You're not a worldlying anymore. You don't depend upon benefits and blessings in this world. Everything you do and say and hope and plan.

Has to do with heaven. It's for Christ. It's for the future.

Is that true of you? That's the kind of blessing which God gives. Blessed with all spiritual blessings. In heavenly places.

In Christ. He may leave you poor. He may leave you on earth.

With material difficulties. But you've got rich heavenly blessings. You're heading for somewhere far better.

And that's where your interests lie. But I want to come to this fourth verse. According as he hath chosen us.

In him. In Christ. Before the foundation of the world.

And there is going to be much about election. And predestination. In this chapter.

According as he hath chosen us. Now this is the great explanation. Well.

You heard the gospel. I heard the gospel. First many years ago.

It came to me as a surprise. I suppose I had heard it. On numerous occasions.

Even though I did not come from a church going family. I suppose I had heard it and it had just gone completely over my head. Back in days when there was far more Christian instruction in schools and so on.

I must have heard lots of things which meant nothing to me. But there came a time when I understood it. And amazingly I felt a great need.

And I am only telling you what has happened to very many of you. And a need of forgiveness. And a sense of being unclean.

And wretched and condemned before God. And that Christ the son of God should come and die for a person like me. And these things moved the heart.

And I came to Christ. And I had quite a struggle at first. Perhaps you did.

Because my repentance was insufficient. And incomplete. And I was still dreaming of things for me.

While at the same time yielding to Christ. But when I came to be wholehearted and earnest. And meant those prayers for forgiveness and for life.

Then changes began to take place. And I was drawn to him and knew him and assured that sins were forgiven. And that I walked with him.

And light and understanding flooded in. And at that point I might very well have thought. Well I have done the right thing.

I have heard the gospel. And I have responded to it. And I have come to Christ.

And yielded to him. Now I don't say I would have felt proud of that. But I might quite innocently have thought that I had done that.

Well that's how it seems on the surface. Suddenly I am woken up spiritually. And I see my need.

And I myself decide to come to Christ. Seems like that. That's a wonderful way God works.

He makes me truly willing. And desiring to have him and forgiveness. But then as I read the word comes the explanation.

Do you know what lies behind that experience of yours the word of God says? Oh well what does lie behind it? Oh the word of God teaches me. It wasn't you you know. That just heard and made that sensible response.

It was God the Holy Spirit working in your heart. Otherwise you never would have done. Oh I am more profoundly than grateful to God.

I was grateful at the death of Christ. And his redeeming love. But now I am caused to be grateful that he woke me up in the first place.

Oh I would never have repented. Never have been humbled. Never have turned to him.

And then the word of God tells me more. You know it wasn't only that the spirit of God worked in your heart. But we can go further back still.

It was that God determined that it should be so. Even before the world began. And that's amazing.

Astonishing. And that's what we are reading about here. In this fourth verse.

According as he has chosen us in him. What do you mean? There was a time in the eternal council. That God determined.

Of course I am thinking of this in human terms. Who should be saved? No says the scripture. That's right.

But it's more than that. It wasn't that God determined who should be saved. It was that God determined who would belong to Christ.

It's all to do with him. It was determined in the eternal council of the Godhead. Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

That the Son Jesus Christ would be the one. The member of the Godhead. Who entered into time.

Came into this world. Gave his life for his people. And it was in connection with him.

That he was given a people. Who would love him and serve him. Why? Why did God choose some? And not others? Was it to do with us? Any good in us? That God foresaw? That we would deserve it more than others? No.

In this chapter as we shall see. Over and over again. The words are repeated.

For his good pleasure. His will. It's unconditional.

Those who God determined to save. There was no good in them. No difference between them and the lost.

Nothing at all to do with us. It was just in the unsearchable will of God. Why? Because if God had not done that.

There isn't a single person. Who would be saved. So bad is the human race.

So rebellious is the human heart. So against God are we within ourselves. Everybody would hear the gospel.

And refuse the Lord. Unless God determined. That there would be an irresistible.

Work of grace. He would overrule. Billions of stubborn hearts.

In his amazing mercy. So that there was a great people. For Christ.

For him to show mercy to. And possess. Throughout the everlasting ages.

It is mercy. That caused God to elect. A vast host of people.

With no merit in them at all. But I must hurry on dear friends. According as he has chosen us.

In him. Before the foundation of the world. And then one of the reasons.

There are others to be given. That we should be holy. And without blame.

Before him in love. What is the objective. Of our salvation.

Why did God determine to overrule. In many many hearts. So that the spirit would work.

And bring us to see our need. And draw us to trust in Christ. What was the objective.

Well one is this. That we should be holy. Separate from the world.

Striving for holiness in this life. And made perfect in the next. And this is how you tell a Christian.

Sanctification is the great goal. We say to ourselves. What can I do? I'm a child of God's mercy.

I don't deserve it. But he softened my heart. Inclined my will.

Drawn me to Christ. Forgiven my sins. What should I do? How should I respond? I should strive for holiness.

Because that's what he wants of me. That's why he's done it for me. I owe it to him.

I must follow my conscience. Keep it alive. Follow the word.

Deal promptly with my sins. Repent quickly of my faults. Ask him for help.

Strive for holiness. That's the objective. You know.

There are advantages and disadvantages of having lived a long time. I've seen many people come to Christ. And their subsequent lives.

God has blessed them and used them mightily. And every year that's gone by has seemed to prove that they really came to Christ. And they're his.

And they're on the road to heaven. Wonderful things that you see. But then you have to say you see some people.

And there have been some over the years. And you think I know that person and that person and that person. And when they were young.

Early twenties. Late teens. They came to the Lord and they seemed so happy.

And so cheerful. And they mixed so well with the people of God. And you wouldn't have suspected that there was anything wrong.

But then suddenly there was a big temptation. And this one. That one.

Fell. Into sin. And there seemed to be not much struggle.

And not much resistance. And left the people of God. And now so far as I know.

They have no worship. No love for Christ. In fact some are viciously almost against him.

Well. They were never saved. You see here in this fourth verse.

Here's the solution to this. According as he hath chosen us in him. Before the foundation of the world.

That we should be holy. And without blame before him in love. Holiness is not only an objective.

It is a sign. Is that person really saved? Or not? Now I know there can be periods of backsliding. Which we must allow for.

But is the person really saved? Because God has saved for holiness. Does that person have a conscience? Does that person struggle against sin? We all sin of course. I'm not saying is that person sinless.

But is that person challengeable? Concerned? Anxious to improve? That's a sign of being converted. The person who says I'm born again. And without conscience.

And without hindrance or hesitation. Sins away and lives as a worldling. That person can't be converted.

Because God's work. Issues in sanctification. It's both a goal for us.

And it's a sign. Of whether we were ever really truly saved. Is there a great battle against sin? Look at verse 5. Having predestinated us.

Here it comes again. Having fixed in advance. Determined in advance.

Having predestinated us. Unto the adoption of children. By Jesus Christ to himself.

And look again. According to the good pleasure of his will. Oh.

Was that predestination. According to the fact. That we might turn to God of our own account.

As soon as we heard the gospel. No. It was according to the good pleasure of his will.

Was God's predestinating love. Taking account of the fact. That one person may be more touchable than another.

A little bit better than another. No. It was according to God's inscrutable will.

No good in us at all. I tell you what may have influenced God's will. Before the foundation of the world.

And that is our prayers. Because God did take account. Of the prayers of his true people.

Even before the foundation of the world. And that's one of the wonderful things. About predestination and election.

You pray for your loved one. Who's gone in the wrong direction. And go on praying.

And pray with all your might. Don't say. Well supposing that person never chooses Christ.

It depends upon God. Your prayers were heard before the foundation of the world. And you may move the heart of God.

To deal with your stubborn loved one. Because salvation is ultimately in the hands of the Lord. So pray without ceasing.

But that's a digression. I'm looking at this fifth verse. Having predestinated us.

Unto the adoption of children. Well time is almost up. I may have to close with this thought.

But adoption. The doctrine of adoption. When we're saved.

We are said to be adopted. Into God's family. And that's a wonderful concept.

People like to argue. When does adoption take place? It's very simple. Elected in eternity.

Justified at Calvary. Adopted at conversion. Or you can look at it another way.

My election. My adoption into God's family. My conversion.

My justification. They were all decreed. Before the foundation of the world.

In the eternal counsel of God. But of course my justification. Couldn't actually be sealed.

Until Christ actually died on Calvary. And my adoption. Couldn't actually be brought about.

Until I was personally converted. But what is adoption? Admitted to God's family. God makes us his sons and his daughters.

From that moment of conversion. He takes responsibility for us. We're his.

He gives us as his children. Great privileges. Access to himself.

I'm a member of the family. I can cry Abba Father to my heavenly father. And I know he will hear me.

I'm embraced by him. What does a father do? A father protects his child. I shall be protected by God.

The enemy will attack me. Satan will tempt me. In my foolishness I may stumble and fall into sin.

But if I'm truly adopted. Well God who is the perfect father will bring me back. Even if he has to discipline me.

The perfect father disciplines. What a privilege. To be even disciplined by God.

Even punished sometimes. To bring me back. Then I know he's my father.

Provided for. He provides for me all spiritual blessings. He provides me with clothing.

The righteousness of Jesus Christ. In which I stand. If you're a father you want to see your child educated.

You want your child to go to a school. Which will benefit the little boy or the little girl. And you'll help.

And I'm adopted into the family of God. And my heavenly father will see to my education. He's given me the word.

He sent the Holy Spirit to help me understand it. What a fool if I don't read the word every day. My heavenly father has put me into this school.

And he's given me the best instructor imaginable in my heart. What a fool if in my laziness I neglect the education that God wishes to give me. And here we are in the 21st century.

At the end of church history almost. With some of the greatest Bible teachers and divines. And we've got books to read and wonderful things to learn from.

We've got the best school of any Christians ever in history. What fools. If we don't want to read.

And we don't want to learn. And we neglect our devotions. Because we're adopted.

And God has provided for our education. What did he adopt me from? He took me out of slavery. Out of Satan's gang.

Delivered me from that. And brought me into the family of redeemed people. And gave me brothers and sisters in the Lord.

And gave me an eternal home. You live in your father's house. And one day it may be yours.

But you can count on it being there. And you can go away for a few days and you come back. And you're not going to find the locks have been changed.

And you bang the door and ring the bell. And your father or your mother says from within, I've forgotten who you are, go away. You're going to heaven.

You belong to the Lord. Even if you come from sin. And from folly and distress.

You can call upon his name and repent of your sin. And he'll gladly receive you in. The concept of adoption.

And God takes all the responsibility of a father for you. Because you're in Christ. And there's more to it even than that.

If I were to adopt a boy or girl. I could try to give an education. I could try to look after them.

I could try to provide them with food, clothing and all these things. But there's something I couldn't do. I couldn't impart my likeness.

Maybe that's a good thing. But I couldn't impart myself. But here's where the illustration falls down.

Because one great aspect of God's adoption. Is that he imparts to us the likeness of Christ. And there's a divine likeness within us.

We don't become divine. Not even 1% divine. But there is a likeness.

And that mean, ill-tempered person. That selfish person in the past. Adopted into the family of God.

Becomes gracious. And refined. And pure.

And gentle. And sensitive. And loving.

Why the difference adoption makes. Because God imparts his very likeness to us. Well, these are tremendous things.

Designed to build up our gratitude. And we're out of time. Here it is.

Having predestinated us. To the adoption of children. By Jesus Christ.

To himself. According to the good pleasure. Of his will.

Boundless gratitude. Is his due. Blessed be the God.

Say that in your heart. Lord, I want to do more than to praise thee. And to thank thee.

I want to return a blessing. I cannot bring anything to thee. The infinite.

Self-sufficient. All-powerful God. But I must return some of the benefits.

That I have received. And I give more than my praise. I give my life.

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