

## Ephesians 1:3-14

### Promises We Have in Christ Alone

#### Introduction

You've probably heard the sayings, "A promise made is a promise kept " or "A promise is only as good as the one who makes it." There is some truth in those sayings. However, there's only one Person who keeps all of His promises all of the time. There's only one Person whose promises are always good, right and perfect. In fact, He is the Greatest Promise. That person is the Lord Jesus Himself.

The Bible is full of God's promises and Scripture states that all of them find their "Yes" in Him, in Christ. In fact in the text, the words "in Christ", "in Him", "in the Beloved" or "through Jesus Christ" are used 11 times. That's an indicator of how important it is for us to realize that God's promises are only and always found in Christ alone.

So, let's take a look specifically at four (4) promises we have in Christ, as stated in [verses 3, 7, 11, 13](#).

[vs 3](#) - every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places

[vs 7](#) - redemption through His blood, the forgiven of sins

[vs 11](#) - obtained an inheritance reserved in heaven

[vs 13](#) - sealed by God with the promised Holy Spirit

I'd like to caution us not to focus too much on the promises, but primarily on the One who gives the promises! And that's Jesus. In addition, it should be noted that these promises can only be claimed exclusively by the believer in Christ. What does it mean to be in Christ?

In Christ means to believe on Jesus' name, to receive Jesus as Lord and Savior, to cross the line of faith and trust in Jesus alone for today, tomorrow and eternity. To be in Christ is the foundation of the Christian life! To be in Christ is to be in the family of God. If you are in Christ, then you are a son or a daughter of the living God. What an assurance! What security! And it's all rooted and established in Jesus.

By the way, last week's sermon by Pastor Dan in his series on [1 Corinthians 13:4-7](#) focused on the truth in [verse 7](#) that love hopes all things. One of the main points was that hope is not to be found in our circumstances changing, but hope is in God and His promises in Christ. So, in this message we'll take a look at four (4) of the promises we have in Christ alone, as cited in today's text.

**1. [Ephesians 1:3](#) - Every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places.** Not all blessings from God are earthly blessings. Some examples of earthly blessings are good health, good food, faithful friends and a loving family.

We have spiritual blessings too. Some of the spiritual blessings God promises in Christ are: 1) pardon from sin, 2) peace with God, 3) redemption through His blood, 4) adoption into God's family and (5) the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

As believers in Christ, we are **all** promised these spiritual blessings because we are **all** justified by faith. In addition, these promises are for now; they're not just in the future. And that means **all** of the promises, whether you are a baby in Christ or a seasoned saint of many years.

[Romans 1:16-17.](#)

*<sup>16</sup> For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. <sup>17</sup> For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."*

[Romans 5:1](#)

*<sup>1</sup> Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In Charles Spurgeon's daily devotional "Morning by Morning" (page 144) he expounds upon the truth that **all** of those who are in Christ are justified the moment they believe. And **all** of those who are in Christ have **all** of the promises that God has made.

*"The thief on the cross was justified the moment that he turned the eye of faith to Jesus. The aged Paul, after years of service, was not more justified than was the thief with no service at all. We are today "accepted in the beloved" ([Eph 1:6](#)), today absolved from sin, today acquitted at the bar of God."*

A person is justified by faith alone in Christ alone by grace alone because of the blood of Jesus, which offers redemption and forgiveness of sins. To put it simply, Jesus' blood makes the difference!

**2. [Ephesians 1:7](#) - Redemption through His blood and the forgiveness of sins.** To be redeemed means to gain or regain possession; to be purchased for a price. If you are in Christ, you are not your own, for you were bought with a price.

An example of being redeemed, to be purchased for a price, is the story of the kinsman-redeemer, Boaz, in the book of Ruth. Boaz purchased a field from Ruth's mother-in-law, Naomi, in order to perpetuate the lineage of Ruth's deceased husband. Ruth became the bride of her kinsman-redeemer, Boaz, because he chose her to be his own.

In the same way, if you are in Christ, Jesus is your Kinsman-Redeemer because He purchased you to be His own with His precious blood. You belong to Christ. You are His bride. You are a member of the body of Christ, the church, a faith-family, brothers and sisters in Christ.

This purchase also fulfills the Scripture which says that without the shedding of blood there can be no forgiveness of sins.

[Hebrews 9:22.](#)

*<sup>22</sup> Indeed, under the law almost everything is purified with blood, and without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.*

In God's plan, the shedding of Jesus' blood and forgiveness of sins is tied together. To be forgiven of sin is to have the blood of Jesus applied to the door posts of your life. It means to be protected from the wrath of God. A good example of this is the Passover in Egypt, where the blood of a sacrificial lamb promised God's people that death would pass over them.

[Exodus 12:13.](#)

*<sup>13</sup> The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.*

Has Jesus' blood been applied to the door posts of your life? Do you have the assurance that God's wrath has passed over you because the blood of Jesus covers your life? If you have, then death and sin have no power over you. But there's more; you also have the promise of a wonderful inheritance in Christ reserved in heaven.

### **3. [Ephesians 1:11](#) - Obtained an inheritance reserved in heaven.**

A person who is in Christ obtains an inheritance because God determined it before the foundation of the world. God gives an inheritance to those whom He adopted into His family according to His purposes. Inheritance is all about family.

An inheritance is a gift that isn't merited. You don't work for your inheritance. It is based on the fact that you're a member of a family. I'm in the Thompson family, so my inheritance is solely based on the fact that I'm a member of that family. In God's family, your inheritance is guaranteed by the Holy Spirit. He, the Holy Spirit, is your guarantee. There is no better guarantee than that! [Ephesians 1:13-14](#)

*<sup>13</sup> In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup> who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory. [Eph 1:13-14](#) (ESV)*

[Galatians 4:6-7.](#)

*<sup>6</sup> And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" <sup>7</sup> So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.*

And if an heir through God, what does that inheritance look like? It is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you. This means that your inheritance is preserved; it is pure and will not change. And it is kept in heaven just for you believer. Awhile back, John Young, one of our elders, preached on this inheritance in Christ.

[1 Peter 1:3b-4](#)

<sup>3b</sup> ...he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, <sup>4</sup> to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you... Your inheritance is reserved for you believer! Waiting in heaven just for you until you acquire possession of it. Your name is written there too. God guarantees it!

Back in the old days, a hotel check-in meant your name was written in a book, where all of the guests were registered. Similarly, if you are in Christ, your name is written in the Book of Life. That fact should bring you much joy! When the disciples, 72 of them, returned to Jesus they were overjoyed that demons were subject to them in Jesus' name. Jesus said, "Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." ([Luke 10:20](#)) That's good news!

But there's bad news too. In the book of Revelation it states "And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire ([Revelation 19:15](#)). But nothing unclean will ever enter it (heaven), nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life." ([Revelation 21:27](#))

And your name is no less important to God than those in the Bible, such as Daniel, David, Esther, Lydia, Peter, Paul or Ruth. Here's an example from Charles Spurgeon's "Morning by Morning" daily devotional (page 86) about God's love being equally as great and deep for all members of His family.

*"Peter and Paul, the highly favored apostles, were of the family of the Most High, and so are you also. The weak Christian is as much a child of God as the strong one. All the names are in the same family register. One may have more grace than another, but God our heavenly Father has the same tender heart toward all."*

*Charles Spurgeon*

So, being in the family of God means that a person belongs to God, which also means their life has been sealed for all eternity. What does it mean to be sealed by God?

**4. [Ephesians 1:13](#)- Sealed by God with the promised Holy Spirit.** In context of this verse, sealed means you have received the seal of approval to God by being in Christ. An official document, such as a birth certificate, will have a seal stamped on it. The seal proves that the document is official. Nothing can change the fact that if you are in Christ, you are sealed by God today, tomorrow and for all eternity. As mentioned earlier, He, the Holy Spirit, is the one who "seals the deal" for the person who trusts in Christ. He, the Holy Spirit, is the guarantee. Nothing can change that fact! Nothing!

Now, let's begin to wrap all of this together, so that there's no doubt that God is the One who is faithful to keep His promises. **All** of the promises of God find their Yes in Jesus.

[2 Corinthians 1:20-22.](#)

*<sup>20</sup> For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory. <sup>21</sup> And it is God who establishes us with you in Christ, and has anointed us, <sup>22</sup> and who has also put his seal on us and given us his Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

If you were taking notes today and someone saw them and asked "Do you mean to say that you have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places?" And you could say "Yes!" "Is it true there's forgiveness of sin and redemption through Jesus' blood?" And you could say "Yes!" "And if you're in Christ, does a person really obtain an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, kept in heaven for you?" And you could say "Yes!" "What about this thing about being sealed by God with the promised Holy Spirit? Can that really be true?" And you could say "Yes!" And it's all because of Jesus!

**Implication and Application of the Promises**

For those of us who trust Jesus, what difference do the promises of God in Christ alone make? When life is difficult and it beats and batters us like the unrelenting power of hurricane-force wind and waves, do we really trust God to make good on His promises?

This summer God allowed me to visit with people in the final days of their life. I prayed with them, laughed with them and cried with them. One was a pastor who preached the gospel for over a half-century. One was an uncle who is remembered from my childhood. One was a dear little lady who treasured the gospel and lived 101 years. And one was a dear man who loved to ask hard questions about truths in the Bible. It was hard to see them in their old age, some struggling with the debilitating effects of cancer.

I cannot change the circumstances of the last season of life, but I can trust in the One and Only God who keeps His promises. As the Good Shepherd, Jesus promised that those who are trusting Him need not be afraid in the valley of the shadow of death because He will be with us; His rod and His staff will comfort us ([Psalm 23:4](#)). As the Great High Priest, Jesus promised eternal life for all who embrace the gospel as a sure and steadfast anchor of the soul ([Hebrews 6:19](#)).

But what about those of you who aren't in Christ, who haven't trusted Jesus? What promises do you have? According to Scripture, there will be an eternal separation from God ([2 Thessalonians 1:8-9](#)). Weeping and gnashing of teeth in hell forever ([Matthew 13:41-42](#)). Not trusting Jesus is like being in the calm of the eye of a hurricane, falsely believing all is well, when in reality death and destruction are all around.

In spite of that sobering truth, God's Word says that nothing is too difficult for Him. No one or no situation is beyond His reach. He has provided the only way to be rescued from sin and death and that's through trusting Jesus alone. Just as a secure shelter promises a safe-haven in a storm, Jesus is the only secure shelter promising safe-haven in all things on earth and in heaven. Won't you trust Him today? He truly is the Greatest Promise.

It's because of Jesus being the Greatest Promise that the Holy Spirit propels us toward loving Him, as well as others, more than self. That's why La Crescent Evangelical Free Church (LEFC) offers Christ-centered ways to connect, grow and serve. We do that at LEFC in Sunday school classes, as well as women's and men's ministries, small groups and prayer meetings. And it's not because we have to, but because we get to. Do we find the Lord Jesus' love for us, His church, so great that we are compelled to be connecting, growing and serving within these walls and outside these walls? Or are we content just to attend, listen and leave?

### **Conclusion**

Here's some final thoughts on the promises that are in Christ alone. If you're in Christ, your place is secure in Him forever, in spite of yourself. In other words, in spite of feeling worthless when you're depressed, Christ holds you securely to Himself. In spite of inappropriate thoughts, words or actions toward others, Jesus doesn't give up on you. Even on your worst day when you don't even think you're a Christian, God has secured your life in Christ by His grace and mercy. You have every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places. You have redemption in His blood, the forgiveness of sins. You've obtained an inheritance reserved in heaven for you. You've been sealed by God with His Holy Spirit. So, why does God give these undeserved, incomprehensibly, wonderful promises?

[Ephesians 1:6, 7b-8.](#)

*<sup>6</sup> to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. <sup>7b</sup> ...according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup> which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight...*

[Eph 1:6, 7b-8](#) (ESV)

All of these promises are to the praise of His glorious grace and according to the riches of His grace, which He lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight. The definition of lavish means an outpouring of profuse proportions, which indicates an overflowing of God's grace beyond our comprehension. That's our God. That's our good, good Father. That's good news! That's the gospel! That's the promises we have in Christ alone! Amen.