

Free, Forgiven & Fully Formed Ephesians 1:7-8

Ephesians 1:3-8 (CSB)

Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ. For he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and blameless in love before him. He predestined us to be adopted as sons through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding.

Who AM I?...

- Who you think you are affects how you think and act toward God.

General Patton—“Old Blood & Guts”

- “Better to fight for something than live for nothing.”
- “A pint of sweat will save a gallon of blood.”
- “Better to accept the challenges of life so you can feel the exhilaration of victory than to stay safe and never matter.”
- “Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men. It is the spirit of the men who follow and also of the man who leads that gains the victory.”
- “Lead me, follow me, or get out of my way.”

1. *Patton: A Genius of War* by Carlo D’Este Patton. 2. *The Man Behind the Legend* by Martin Blumenson.

Imagine if Gen. George S. Patton was unclear about his identity...

- What if he vacillated in his identity as a leader?
- What if he thought he was “GREAT” one day but spinelessly indecisive and uncertain the next?
- Or worse, imagine if he wasn’t sure if he had the AUTHORITY to lead others?
 - One day he shows up to lead and the next he’s quietly hiding in the kitchen peeling potatoes.

It was important for Patton to **KNOW** that he was a general.

And he **WAS** a general—he was not confused about this.

- He knew he was a great general, and he did what great generals do—he won battles.

Christian, God loves you and has given you an **AMAZING** new identity!

- He has taken away your old identity and has adopted you into His family.
- You are a **NEW** person—fully loved, fully free, fully forgiven, and fully formed.

The challenge many of us face is we don’t walk in our identity as God’s chosen children—as Kingdom Kids.

The Apostle Paul wrote to the Ephesians so that we would know **WHO WE ARE**.

- *This KNOWING WHO WE ARE is the passionately-pursued outcome that Paul is hoping for.*
- *He unfolds this Christ-focused, identity-forming REALITY for all of us who are IN CHRIST.*

So far, here is what we have seen is true of us “In Christ”:

Ephesians 1:3-6 (CSB)

- Blessed is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has **blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavens in Christ.**

- For **he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world**, to be holy and blameless in love before him.
- **He predestined us to be adopted as sons** through Jesus Christ for himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace that he lavished on us in the Beloved One.

Our passage today continues:

Ephesians 1:7-8 (CSB)

In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace that he richly poured out on us with all wisdom and understanding.

We have REDEMPTION through the blood of Jesus.

This means that God has purchased our freedom—by exchanging the perfect life of Jesus with ours.

- **As sinners, we were NOT free people.**
- **We NEEDED to be purchased out of slavery—we needed to be rescued.**
- **We all LONG for freedom—to be rescued...**

Everyone who is NOT in Christ is desperately looking for freedom.

- How do I know this? Because this was me!

Before I surrendered my life to Christ I was DESPERATELY looking for freedom.

...and as morbid and ironic as it is, even though I was a slave to sin I would search for freedom in MORE sin!

- I had a distinct sense of not-belonging—I truly knew I was alienated from God and others.
- And so I would search for freedom—for belonging and satisfaction by diving into more sin!
 - Our feelings of not belonging cause us to cultivate bitterness in our heart.
 - Our feelings of not-good-enough cause us to burn with jealousy.
 - Feelings of dissatisfaction cause us to lust.
 - When we feel constrained or trapped we tend INDULGE in food or alcohol or sex...

In all of our desperation and searching for freedom in life...

- In our alcohol consumption...
- In our greedy pursuit of more money...
- In putting others down in order to promote ourself...
- In our sexual liberty and hidden pursuit of pornography...

In all of our searching for freedom, we only and always find ourselves more & more enslaved to sin.

Scripture clearly teaches that sin has REAL power.

It is a power that enslaves:

John 8:34

Jesus responded, “Truly I tell you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin.

Genesis 4:7b (NLT)

...Sin is crouching at the door, eager to control you.

That’s what it does too, doesn’t it? CONTROLS US...

Sin is progressive—it starts small...and then increases...and increases...and increases...

- It’s a process—like building a brick wall.

- Often our sin feels like this—just one brick laid at a time.
- You fill a spot with a brick only for that brick to reveal another spot needing another brick... James compares the progression of sin to pregnancy...

James 1:14-15 (CSB)

But each person is tempted when he is drawn away and enticed by his own evil desire. Then after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin, and when sin is fully grown, it gives birth to death.

But sin isn't just some faceless impulse:

- We have a REAL enemy in our battle against sin.
- There is a REAL enemy fighting against us establishing our identity in Christ.
- **The real power behind sin—the true enemy—is Satan.**

1 Peter 5:8-9 (CSB)

Be sober-minded, be alert. Your adversary the devil is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour. Resist him, firm in the faith, knowing that the same kind of sufferings are being experienced by your fellow believers throughout the world.

John 10:10 (NLT)

The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

We get attacked by a REAL enemy.

- All of us—we were all enslaved by this enemy.
- And all of us need to be rescued—we NEED to be redeemed.
- All of us have rebelled against our creator and need to be forgiven.

Now, you might be REALLY good at... what's it called again? Oh yeah... self-control.

- I've heard about that...

Anyway, some of you have more self-control than others of us.

- And some of us—if we REALLY try hard enough—may break away from this one sin here and there.
- But NONE OF US can break away from the death-grip of sin.

This is the natural condition of every single human apart from Jesus:

- **SLAVE to sin**
- **DEAD in sin**
- **LOST in sin**

This is our greatest need:

We were slaves to sin—we need to be purchased and set free from our slavery.

We were dead in sin—we need to be restored to a NEW life with real power to battle sin.

We are lost in our sin—we need to be FOUND and ACCEPTED and LOVED.

THIS is what Paul is so excited about—God through Christ has done this for us!

God has COMPLETELY and FULLY delivered us from sin.

How? By beating Satan at his own game:

Jesus was tempted by Satan but remained faithful.

- Jesus COMPLETELY and FULLY conquered sin by remaining sinless.

- Jesus completely conquered death by giving up His life and then raising Himself from the grave.

This idea of “redemption” simply means that someone comes up to a slave owner and outright BUYS the slave from the owner.

- Redemption refers to this release from slavery upon the receipt of a payment.

God’s not some lame Craigslist buyer...

- He doesn’t say he’s interested but doesn’t show up...
- He doesn’t show up and try to lowball anybody...

Jesus shows up—and with CASH!!

God came down from heaven to buy us out of slavery AND to adopt us as sons and daughters of God!

The Bible teaches that Jesus paid a RANSOM for us.

- That means we CANNOT free ourselves.
- That means we were held captive.
- That means we were desperate and hopeless and needed to be rescued!

Paul says He PURCHASED OUR FREEDOM...listen how he did this...

Ephesians 1:7-8 (NLT)

He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins.

Just like God stepped in and delivered Israel... over, and over, and over...

We, like Israel have been delivered from the tyranny and desperation of slavery to sin.

This idea of REDEMPTION emphasizes the great price that was paid for us.

- God paid a HIGH PRICE—TOP DOLLAR!

John 8:36 (CSB)

...if the Son sets you free, you really will be free.

A Great price was paid for a true, REAL freedom.

- This is the freedom we are given.
- This isn’t some “sorta free” freedom...
- This isn’t a some cheap, bargain-priced knock-off false freedom...

Remember, God redeemed us ACCORDING TO THE RICHES OF HIS GRACE!!

God didn’t score a bargain when He purchased you.

- He sent His own son to live perfectly and then die horrifically in order to pay your ransom price.

God paid FULL PRICE for you!

Because He paid full price, He has FULL OWNERSHIP.

- God paying full price is evidence of His FULL POWER!
- God paying full price is proof of His FULL LOVE & FULL COMMITMENT!

He chose to purchase you, He paid full price for you.

And so He has complete ownership—We are under NEW OWNERSHIP.

- But our new owner didn’t buy us out of slavery so we could be His slaves.
- The one who redeemed us out of slavery to sin actually loves us.

- He redeemed us out of slavery so that He could adopt us and we could be his kids!
God loves you and wants you to be free, so He has given you free will.

And God has done EVERYTHING to set you free

Since a great price was paid and the power of slavery to sin has been broken, we must also know that there is no longer ANY sin that cannot be overcome in our lives.

- No bad habit has power over you anymore.
- No addiction can enslave you any longer.
- NOTHING can hold you captive now that you've been redeemed by God.

Romans 6:6-7, 11 (CSB)

We know that our old sinful selves were crucified with Christ so that sin might lose its power in our lives. We are no longer slaves to sin. For when we died with Christ we were set free from the power of sin.

So you also should consider yourselves to be dead to the power of sin and alive to God through Christ Jesus.

We are no longer dead IN sin—we are now dead TO sin!

So that now (v.6) we praise God for the glorious grace He has graced us with!

- Freedom feels SO GOOD!
- We are FREE!

This is not just some past-tense experience for us...It says, in Him WE HAVE redemption—that is in the PRESENT TENSE.

- WE HAVE redemption—this is a reality for us to experience TODAY!
- This means we can live in a totally different way—a NEW way.

Sin had REAL power over us—it was our master—BUT GOD redeemed us at a high price.

But it wasn't just the POWER of sin that had to be broken—the PENALTY of sin needed to be broken too.

- The penalty of sin is real.
- Sin creates a real burden.

A burden for the sinner, for their loved ones, and a burden for the person sinned against.

- We know this because it isn't easy to quickly "get over it" when someone sins against us.
- We all understand that there is a real burden that sin creates, and that we all deal with this burden.

Paul says that God has given us, "the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace."

- Listen, God doesn't forgive the way I forgive.
- God forgives ACCORDING TO His riches in grace.
 - That's a PERMANENT forgiveness!

Jeremiah 31:34b (CSB)

"For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin."

THAT is forgiveness!!

God has not only loved us, but also chosen us, and adopted us, and redeemed us and lavished His kindness on us, **but He has also given us wisdom and understanding.**

- This is vital!

Because we must rely on the benefits of grace and also the benefits of wisdom and understanding to live well.

In **grace** we realize that when we sin we are forgiven and secure to the glory of God.

- Grace reveals to us our utter sinfulness.

In **wisdom** we realize that our freedom is not for ourselves but that we might live to the glory of God.

- Wisdom reveals to us our foolishness—selfishness.

In **understanding** we discover or discern how to live for God's glory in every way.

- Understanding reveals to us our recklessness.

Wisdom & understanding are part of how God fully forms us & empowers us to live holy lives.

- They are necessary for us to live lives pleasing to God.
- They are also GIFTS from God that we are given.

They are given to us because God does not only want us saved but also healthy and whole.

- not only going to heaven but also glorifying Him on earth
- not only experiencing positional holiness but also practical holiness.

So, He gives us wisdom and understanding—and, He lavishes it on us!!

- When we speak of lavish we speak of excess
- To lavish something on someone is to shower it on them—to have way more than enough

God had lavished us with wisdom & understanding, but we still must receive it and grow in it and cultivate it.

God gives us this wisdom and understanding in 3 primary ways:

God's wisdom is given to us in 3 ways:

- 1. Scripture—The Word of God**
- 2. Prayer & Worship— the presence of God**
- 3. Community—the family of God**

- God has done this by giving us His word—so we give ourselves to reading scripture.
- He has also given us access to Himself—so we pursue His presence in prayer.
- He has given us one another—so we make time to gather in community—as family!

We have been made BRAND NEW in Christ!

- We are no longer slaves to sin—we are FREE FROM sin!
- We are no longer guilty of our sins—we are forgiven!
- We are no longer unable to make good choices—we have been given wisdom & understanding.
 - God's wisdom and understanding matures us!
 - We are “fully formed” by God in Christ.

SO, WHO ARE YOU?

Christian, as God's very own children, this is who you now are in Christ:

In Christ:

- **You are FREE.**
- **You are FORGIVEN.**
- **You are FULLY FORMED.**

We HAVE been blessed with every spiritual blessing!

That sounds great—like God gave us a bunch of presents on Christmas...

- These gifts are not quite that trite...

God has given you gifts so that you might BLODLY WALK as His Kingdom Kid.

- God has placed you in your home—around your roommates or neighbors for a reason.
- God has placed you in your school or job or daily routine for a reason.
- God has led you to shop at Trader Joes and Smart & Final for a reason.
- God has given you the desire to skate or surf or work out or walk—for a reason.

Reason #1—so you can be saved and walk in freedom and enjoy Jesus now & forever!

Reason #2—so you can show the world what God’s love does to people, and help your friends and neighbors find a new identity in Christ too.

God has placed you here—now.

With ALL WISDOM and ALL KNOWLEDGE, God is wanting to save people. And God chooses to demonstrate His love through His FREE, FORGIVEN & FULLY FORMED Kingdom Kids!!

I challenge you to Know:

KNOW WHO YOU ARE.

KNOW WHAT YOU ARE.

KNOW WHY YOU ARE.

- God loves you!
 - He has done EVERYTHING necessary to bring you to Himself.
 - God has done everything to SAVE and FORGIVE and MATURE you.
- Maybe there are some areas where you are not walking in freedom...
 - Maybe there are some areas where you are not walking in forgiveness...
 - Maybe there are some areas of immaturity that God is wanting to fully form in you...
- **RECEIVE this gift of freedom from slavery today—let God purchase your freedom by putting your faith in His son Jesus.**
 - **RESPOND to this gift by confessing the sin that has been your master—EVICT IT!**
 - **REST in the love of God as REST as a child of God!**