

This is Becka Antonetz, y'all may know my husband Jake from the v220 staff.

I've been out of the country these past few months working on my visa, but I know a lot of y'all from helping out with Sunday school, camp, Vertical Wednesdays, and other youth events.

I'd like to share a message on Ephesians 1:3-14, this is from ESV:

*"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. 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, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory."*

Ephesians was written by Paul to show believers the spiritual resources we have as Christians in order to fulfill God's final purpose for the Church: offer honor and glory to His name.

Here are some truths Paul gives us:

- We are blessed (v. 3) - God has blessed us beyond measure, if we were to list all things He has blessed us with, we would never have enough time. The very breath in our lungs, having a roof over our heads, freedom to gather as church and worship the Lord together... and the biggest of all is salvation, through which we are granted a relationship with our Creator, the King of Kings, the ruler of all! We are blessed beyond measure.
- We are God's Children (v. 4-5) - God chose to have us for Himself, He didn't choose us before the creation of the world because of something we could do or be, for who we are, there's nothing good that comes from our fallen human nature that we could offer God. He chose us out of love, to set us apart from a

wicked world, to be holy and to live to His pleasure . We can only accomplish this through Jesus' blood on the cross, with the Holy Spirit living in us. Jesus is not only our friend and Lord, but our Big Brother, we are adopted as sons and daughters (Rm 8.15). God gave his only son, so we could be part of His family, He doesn't see our sin stained past when He looks at us, He sees Jesus' perfect life, the only unblemished sheep that could be sacrificed and cover all our sins once and for all and allow us to come in the presence of the Holy One.

- We should live for His Glory (v. 12) - There's nothing we could do or have done to deserve all the blessings He has daily given us, but there's a way to live knowing Him, recognizing His love for us, living in a way that would bring Him glory and light to a darkened world. We should seek Him daily, seek to be imitators of Christ, hoping for the day we will be in His presence, in the heavenly places (v. 3).